The UNESCO COURIER

OCTOBER 1991

INTERVIEW WITH NOBEL LAUREATE
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

CHILDREN IN DANGER

STARTING IN THIS ISSUE
UNESCO IN ACTION:
THE FIRST 45 YEARS

THE STORY
OF A GRAND DESIGN
by FEDERICO MAYOR

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STARTING IN THIS ISSUE:

UNESCO FROM THE BEGINNING: A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

THE STORY OF A GRAND DESIGN

BY FEDERICO MAYOR
Director-General of UNESCO

THE memory of an institution is at once more reliable and more precarious than that of an individual. More reliable, because it is not subject to physical decay and also less subjective, since its collective nature provides it with a permanent capacity for checking and cross-checking.

But at the same time it is more precarious. Partly as a result of compartmentalization, the members of an institution do not always realize the importance of those fragments of the past of which they are the sole repositories. All too often they rely on others to transmit the heritage of history and information which they share with their colleagues. The institutional memory is also fallible because institutions live longer than people. As soon as those who have served an institution since its foundation start to leave it, the record of its history is exposed to destruction, to oblivion.

However essential they may be, and however well-organized, archives can never fully replace the living testimony of eyewitnesses. The play of influences, the power and charisma of certain personalities, the enthusiasm of great moments of unanimity, the clash of controversy—all these factors elude the archival memory, along with the anecdotes which can bring a situation back to life and which are often, perhaps wrongly, disdained as trivia. The atmosphere in which events unfold and decisions are taken cannot be captured and preserved in dossiers.

Something of this atmosphere seems to me, fortunately, to have been preserved in the chronicle presented on the following pages, which has been prepared not only from documentary evidence but also with the aid of conversations with those who took part in the events described. These individual contributions are important today. Now that UNESCO is forty-five years old, its existence outspans the careers of even those who have served it longest.

The late 1980s were a milestone in UNESCO's history. They were a time for taking stock and breaking new ground. Today one generation is handing over to another. To the new generation I would particularly recommend this chronology, which will provide it with a humus of memory and tradition in which its energy can take root. To the departing generation, to those who at all levels of responsibility, through doubts and certainties, failures and successes, have made the history of UNESCO and are its living memory, this chronology is naturally dedicated.

In such a context it would be equally impossible not to think of the promoters and precursors of UNESCO, the pioneers whose role is recalled in these pages: the resolute men and women—educators, jurists, writers, philosophers, great scientists—who believed, while war was still raging, that one of the priorities of the postwar world would be the dedicated search for alternatives to ignorance and philistinism, injustice and violence.

I wonder whether the exemplary nature of this enterprise has been sufficiently recognized and whether enough thought has been given to the small group of founding fathers who in war-torn London in 1942 pooled their abilities and their convictions in order to give shape to their intuition, with a serenity and farsightedness that enabled them to look beyond the grim events around them. Have we paid due respect to the disinterestedness—so characteristic of devotion to great causes—that involved them in this enterprise whose credibility everything then seemed to deny?

The objectives they set forth are still far from being achieved. "It is UNESCO's vocation to be a permanent question". This phrase, which featured in UNESCO's fortieth anniversary exhibition in 1986, summed up the thinking of some of the Organization's great figures. It seems to me to be extremely apt. It is impossible to be certain of the outcome of such a vast and ambitious mission as ours—one which may sometimes seem thankless to those who seek tangible and immediate results, yet inspiring to those who are convinced of its long-term necessity.

Finally let me express the pride I feel in exercising my responsibilities at a time which is doubtless difficult but when the opening of the last decade of the century and the millennium invites us to look back and to reflect. In this issue the *Courier* begins publication of a chronological record of UNESCO's history, a testimony to the accomplishments and events which have marked its life since its inception. This record of achievements that are already considerable will, I am sure, serve as a reminder of our springs of action and inspire us with the vigour of renewed commitment. ■

The opening of the first General Conference of UNESCO at the Sorbonne, Paris, on 20 November 1946.

UNESCO's first 45 years

ANY chronicle of the achievements and events that have marked the four and a half decades of existence of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is bound to be selective. It is also bound to highlight the three major aspects of UNESCO's activities: their range in space and time, since they extend to all the continents and most of them are long-term; their diversity of type and content; and the spirit of perseverance which inspires them in pursuit of the common goal of helping to bring humankind together and to promote international understanding. These qualities characterize both the most spectacular of UNESCO's activities, such as its international campaigns for the preservation of great monuments, and those—far more numerous—that may long go unnoticed before their results finally take tangible form.

Raising awareness and stimulating action; formulating experimental models and pilot projects; providing technical assistance, consultation with specialists; acting as a source of documentation and information; training—a fundamental activity whose effects multiply over the years; standard-setting activities; drawing up intellectual guidelines for action—this is the substance of UNESCO's work. By these means UNESCO accomplishes its mission of breaking down geographical barriers to the spread of knowledge and encouraging dialogue between cultures. In this way UNESCO seeks to carry out the mandate assigned to it by its Constitution, of "advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace". This is a long-term effort which it is difficult to present in calendar form. We hope however that it will appear in the background of this chronology.

The chronology is divided under seven headings. The first—General Policy—subsumes the major decisions of UNESCO's General Conference, the evolution of the Organization's governing bodies, UNESCO's relations with its Member States, and activities which extend over several fields of its programme. Five other headings correspond to UNESCO's five sectors: Education; Exact and Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Culture; Communication. The seventh heading (Events) covers all the exhibitions, visits, seminars and celebrations that in a sense constitute the social life of UNESCO while contributing to its cultural influence.

Considerable space has been given to the collaboration which began at a very early stage between UNESCO and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some of which have a very close working relationship with the Organization. The NGOs are partners of great importance for UNESCO, since their members are internationally known specialists in UNESCO's fields of competence. Some of them were created before UNESCO, most subsequently, and several at UNESCO's initiative. In the chronology their activities are briefly referred to, and special attention is given to those which co-operate technically with the Organization.

The chronology naturally stresses UNESCO's programme activities under the five main headings. These programmes and projects appear either under the date when they were first decided upon, or when they were inaugurated, or when they entered one of their most significant stages.

MICHEL CONIL LACOSTE ■ **3**

From left to right:
Ellen Wilkinson;
Jaime Torres Bodet;
Jacques Maritain;
Léon Blum;
Eleanor Roosevelt with René Cassin;
Julian Huxley with Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

1942-1945

THE EARLY DAYS

16 November 1942.
London.

First meeting of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) held on the initiative of R.A. Butler, President of the Board of Education of England and Wales. CAME, which soon expands to include other countries, notably the United States, holds many sessions until the end of 1945. From its meetings the idea gradually emerges of creating an organization which will primarily be concerned with promoting co-operation between the wartime allies in the field of education.

1944

The poet Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress, is a member of the U.S delegation to CAME and plays an important role in drafting UNESCO's Constitution. The extension of the future organization's field of competence, especially to science, is discussed: should it be UNEO, UNECO or UNESCO? The campaign to put the S (for science) in UNESCO is led by the British biochemist and historian of science Joseph Needham and by his colleague Julian Huxley, who will be UNESCO's first Director-General.

9 October 1944

At Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.), the final preparations are made for the conference at San Francisco, the following year, which will create the United Nations Organization.

April-June 1945

The United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) is held at San Francisco. Acting on a motion by France and certain Chinese and Latin American proposals, the Conference, on the sidelines of its discussions on the organization of postwar security, recommends that a conference be convened to establish an international organization on "intellectual co-operation". The terms of the motion indicate the French preference for a new organization built around a revived and reorganized International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC). (Founded in Paris in 1925 as the executive body of the International Commission for Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations, the IIIC was in a sense the League's UNESCO.) There is unanimous agreement on the basic principle defined by Georges Bidault, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the French delegation: "In addition to the economic and social cornerstones, the international edifice needs a third mainstay".

24 October 1945

The United Nations Charter adopted at San Francisco comes into effect. Article 57 provides for the creation of a specialized agency in the fields of education and culture.

1-16 November 1945

A Conference to establish an Educational and Cultural Organization of the United Nations meets in London, at the invitation of the British and French governments. In his welcoming address, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee says that "Today the peoples of the world are islands shouting at each other over seas of misunderstanding. . . . 'Know thyself', said the old proverb. 'Know your neighbour', we say today. And the whole world is our neighbour." On 16 November, the Constitution of UNESCO is signed by 37 States and the Final Act by 41. A Preparatory Commission is created.

16 November 1945

The first meeting of the Preparatory Commission is held in London. The Commission's first secretary, the sociologist and historian Sir Alfred Zimmern, is soon replaced for health reasons by Julian Huxley.

1946

General policy

- 16 September: The Preparatory Commission for UNESCO moves from London to Paris (Hotel Majestic, Avenue Kléber).
- 4 November: UNESCO's Constitution comes into force with its ratification by the 20th signatory State, Greece.
- November/December: The first session of the General Conference opens at the Sorbonne under the presidency of Léon Blum (France). There is an enthusiastic atmosphere but also a debate between those for whom "the action of UNESCO presupposes a philosophy. . . , a coherent general doctrine which enables it to see things from a unique angle" (Julian Huxley) and those who believe that it can and should do without such a doctrine, in view of the practical nature of its aims.
- At the first session of UNESCO's Executive Board, Julian Huxley (United Kingdom) is elected Director-General.
- UNESCO's first annual budget is set at US$6,250,000.
- 31 December: The International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation ceases its activities, which it had continued after the war. On 19 December it signs an agreement with UNESCO "to ensure the continuity, under the responsibility of UNESCO, of the work accomplished since 1924" by the Institute. The agreement provides for the transfer to the United Nations from the League of Nations, of the assets of the IIIC, especially its library, its archives, stocks of publications and the copyrights and publication rights pertaining thereto. This transfer will be effective in 1947.

Exact and natural sciences

■ An agreement between UNESCO and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) inaugurates UNESCO's policy of co-operation with the major international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Created in 1931, ICSU today consists of 20 international scientific unions (organized by discipline), 74 national members (academies of sciences) and 29 scientific associates.[1] UNESCO/ICSU co-operation will constantly develop over the years in the form of joint programmes in such fields as geological correlation, climate change, scientific and technological information, and training in biology in developing countries.

Culture

■ The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is founded in Paris. Its documentation centre, which becomes the UNESCO/ICOM Documentation Centre, is a unique repository of information on all aspects of museum management. ICOM's first director is the distinguished French museologist Georges-Henri Rivière. Its members include over 8,000 individuals and institutions in 120 countries.

Communication

■ A section concerned with communications is created in the UNESCO Secretariat.

Events

■ The French writer André Gide notes in his Journal: "I send to Huxley, as epigraph to UNESCO's programme, the last line of the second book of the *Aeneid*, endowing it with a symbolic meaning: '. . . and assuming the full charge of my heritage, I shall strive towards the heights'. Isn't this what UNESCO is trying to do?"

1947

General policy

■ At the second session of the General Conference, held in Mexico City, the ideological debate which had marked the first session continues with important contributions from Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (India) and Mgr Maroun (Lebanon). In a notable address, Jacques Maritain, head of the French delegation, distances himself from Huxley's "evolutionary humanism" and from his desire to provide UNESCO with a specific doctrine. In the "babel" of contemporary thought, he notes, "Dig as we may, there are no common foundations for speculative thought. . . . Because the goal of UNESCO is a practical goal, agreement between minds can be reached spontaneously, not on the basis of common speculative ideas, but on common practical ideas, not on the affirmation of one and the same conception of the world, . . . but upon the affirmation of a single body of beliefs for guidance in action. No doubt this is little enough. . . . It is, nevertheless, enough to enable a great task to be undertaken."

■ At its second session the Executive Board adopts for 1947 a programme whose main thrust is the reconstruction and rehabilitation of educational, scientific and cultural life in war-devastated countries, principally in Europe, with the accent on libraries, museums and the free flow of information.

■ The first UNESCO Associations are founded in Japan and the United States. This spontaneous movement of support for UNESCO and the propagation of its ideals spreads quickly. In 1991 there are almost 3,800 UNESCO Associations and Clubs in 104 States in all the continents.

Exact and natural sciences

■ The first "Field Science Co-operation Offices" (later to become Regional Offices for Science and Technology) are founded in Cairo, Rio de Janeiro, Nankin and New Delhi.

Communication

■ UNESCO carries out a survey in 12 war-devastated countries on technical needs in press, radio and films.

1948

General policy

■ Jaime Torres Bodet (Mexico) is elected Director-General on the expiry of Julian Huxley's 2-year mandate.

■ UNESCO's General Conference meets in Beirut and adopts by acclamation a resolution instructing the Director-General "to stimulate the dissemination of information about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted a few hours earlier by the United Nations.

■ UNESCO's fellowship and study grant programme is inaugurated. Awards are made largely by the Education Sector (709 for 1984-1985), and by the Science Sector (355 for the same period), for an average length of 6 months. The main beneficiary regions are Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States.

■ Launch of a Book Coupon Programme to make it easier for people in soft currency countries to buy books, and subsequently other cultural and scientific material, from hard currency countries. Almost $300 million worth of UNESCO Gift Coupons sold by 1986.

■ UNESCO's trilingual quarterly *Copyright Bulletin* is launched.

■ The first issue of the *UNESCO Courier* is published.

The covers of three early UNESCO publications.

Education

■ At Utrecht, an international conference organized by UNESCO and the Netherlands government paves the way for the creation of the International Association of Universities (IAU), a centre for world-wide co-operation in higher education (official foundation date: 1950).

Exact and natural sciences

■ The International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN) is founded at Fontainebleau at a conference convened by UNESCO and the French government. Now named the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, it has its headquarters at Gland (Switzerland).

■ At Beirut, the General Conference adopts a resolution proposed by India instructing UNESCO to examine the possibility of establishing an International Institute for the Arid Zone. The idea will be taken up three years later in the form of a UNESCO programme.

Culture

■ A programme for the translation of classic and contemporary literary works in the "UNESCO Collection of Representative Works" is inaugurated. This programme, with which Roger Caillois, Etiemble and Jean Thomas are closely associated, was partly due to an "arts and letters" unit of which the Greek novelist Nikos Kazantzakis was a member.

1. Statistics in this chronology not relating to the year under which they are given are valid for the first half of 1991.

■ The first issue of *Museum*, a quarterly magazine devoted to significant new developments in museography, is produced in association with ICOM. *Museum* is published in French, English, Spanish, Russian and Arabic (plus special issues in other languages).

■ The International Council on Archives (ICA) is established.

■ On the initiative of Julian Huxley, the International Theatre Institute (ITI) is set up to promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in theatre arts and to stimulate creativity in this field. Members and activities include 9 international organizations, 69 national or associated centres; in co-operation with UNESCO, the itinerant "University of the Theatre of Nations". The ITI is currently preparing a *World Encyclopaedia of Theatre.*

Communication

■ The "Beirut Agreement" for facilitating the international circulation of visual and auditory materials of an educational, scientific and cultural character is signed. (It will come into force in 1954).

1949

General policy

■ A decision of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) sets up an extended programme of technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, leading to operational action by UNESCO, where a department of technical assistance headed by Malcolm Adiseshiah (India) is established.

Education

■ A fundamental education pilot project is launched in the Marbial valley (Haiti).

■ The first international conference on adult education is held at Elsinore (Denmark): 3 similar conferences will be held in 1960 (Montreal), 1972 (Tokyo) and 1985 (UNESCO HQ, Paris).

■ The first volume of *Study Abroad*, an international handbook providing details of opportunities for international study in UNESCO's Member States, is published.

Social sciences

■ At the instigation of the United Nations, UNESCO launches an information campaign, based on meetings of anthropologists and biologists, to expose the fallacies of racism. The Swiss anthropologist Alfred Métraux plays an important role.

■ The *International Social Science Bulletin*, (later the *International Social Science Journal*), a multidisciplinary quarterly designed to foster communication and the exchange of knowledge between professionals in the social sciences, is published in English and French. Later, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian editions are added. Selections of articles occasionally appear in other languages.

■ An exhibition is organized at the Musée Galliera in Paris by UNESCO and the French government as part of efforts to publicize the Declaration of Human Rights. Texts and illustrations are published in book form the following year. This initiative comes from an "Ideas Group" created the previous year in the Department of Mass Communication.

Culture

■ The first *Catalogue of Reproductions of Paintings*, a listing of high-quality colour reproductions, is published. UNESCO's programme of travelling exhibitions of reproductions will develop from this.

■ The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS) is created on UNESCO's initiative.

The ICPHS groups 13 international non-governmental organizations representing all the disciplines of the human sciences (philosophy, history, linguistics, anthropology, "classical" studies, African and Asiatic studies, etc.). Its network of individual members and scientific bodies are drawn from 145 countries. Publications connected with UNESCO's programme include: *Sources for the General History of Africa, Sources for the History of Asia, Corpus of pre-Columbian Archaeological Material*, language atlases (China, the Pacific), *Concordance and Indexes of Moslem Tradition*, an edition of the *Mahabharata*. The ICPHS advises UNESCO on the choice of authors for the literature translation programme (later joined by International PEN for contemporary authors).

■ At UNESCO's initiative, the International Music Council (IMC) is set up. Today it groups 27 international professional organizations and is represented in 68 countries. Its programme includes the International Rostrum of Composers, the International Rostrum of Young Composers, and the Music Rostra of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Arab world. The IMC is preparing a world history of music written for the first time in a fully intercultural perspective. The first volumes, devoted to the Americas, will be published in English in 1992 by the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.), under the title *The Universe of Music: a History.*

■ The first volume is published of the new series of the *Index Translationum*, an annual multilingual guide to translations of books published in UNESCO Member States. UNESCO thus continues, after an interruption of 10 years, the work of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, which had created the guide and published it between 1932 and 1940.

For 1948 the *Index* lists 8,570 translations published in 26 countries. Volume 38 (published 1991 and covering the year 1985) lists 57,374 for 59 countries.

The most translated works and authors in the last decade: the Bible, Lenin, Marx, Agatha Christie, Jules Verne, Barbara Cartland, Leo Tolstoy. Main trends: the rise in popular literature and children's literature.

Since volume 32 (1979), this reference work prepared mainly for publishers, translators, writers, teachers and students has been computerized.

■ Collaboration begins between UNESCO and the International Commission for Translation, Lebanon (translation from and into Arabic.)

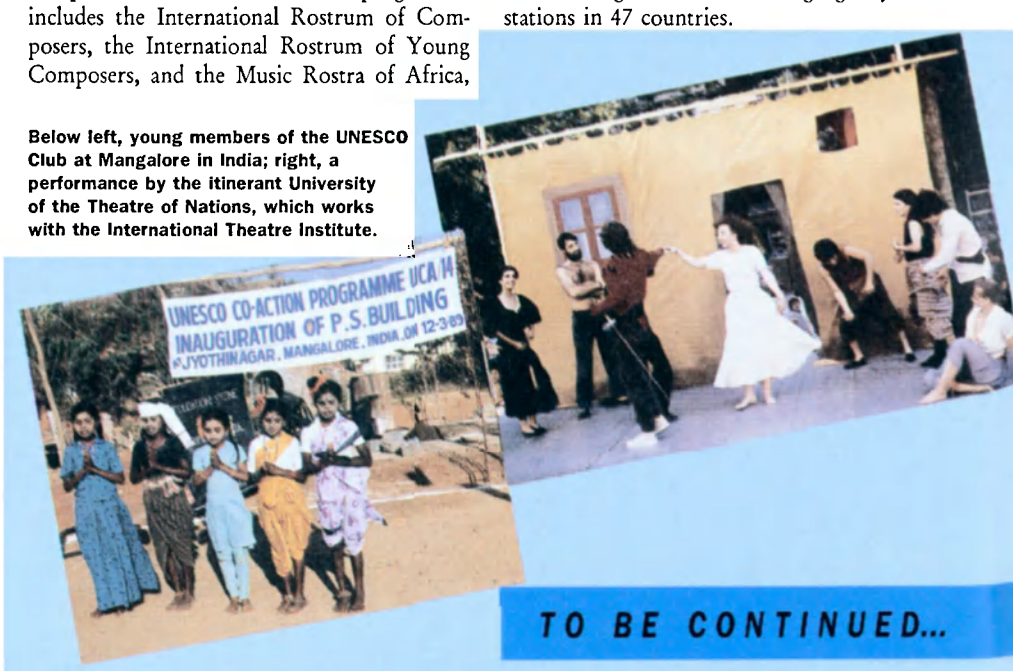
Communication

■ A first study on the professional training of journalists is undertaken.

■ UNESCO sends the Canadian film-maker Norman McLaren to China to train village educators in animation techniques for the preparation of cartoon films.

■ UNESCO creates a small radio recording studio and broadcasts a weekly 15-minute programme on education, science and culture. The programme, "UNESCO World Review", is soon being broadcast in 18 languages by radio stations in 47 countries.

Below left, young members of the UNESCO Club at Mangalore in India; right, a performance by the itinerant University of the Theatre of Nations, which works with the International Theatre Institute.



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GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

The UNESCO COURIER

44th YEAR
Published monthly in 35 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,

"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed...

"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives..."

Extract from the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, London, 16 November 1945

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CHILDREN IN DANGER

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Detail from *I want to go home*, a work by a 5-year-old from China.

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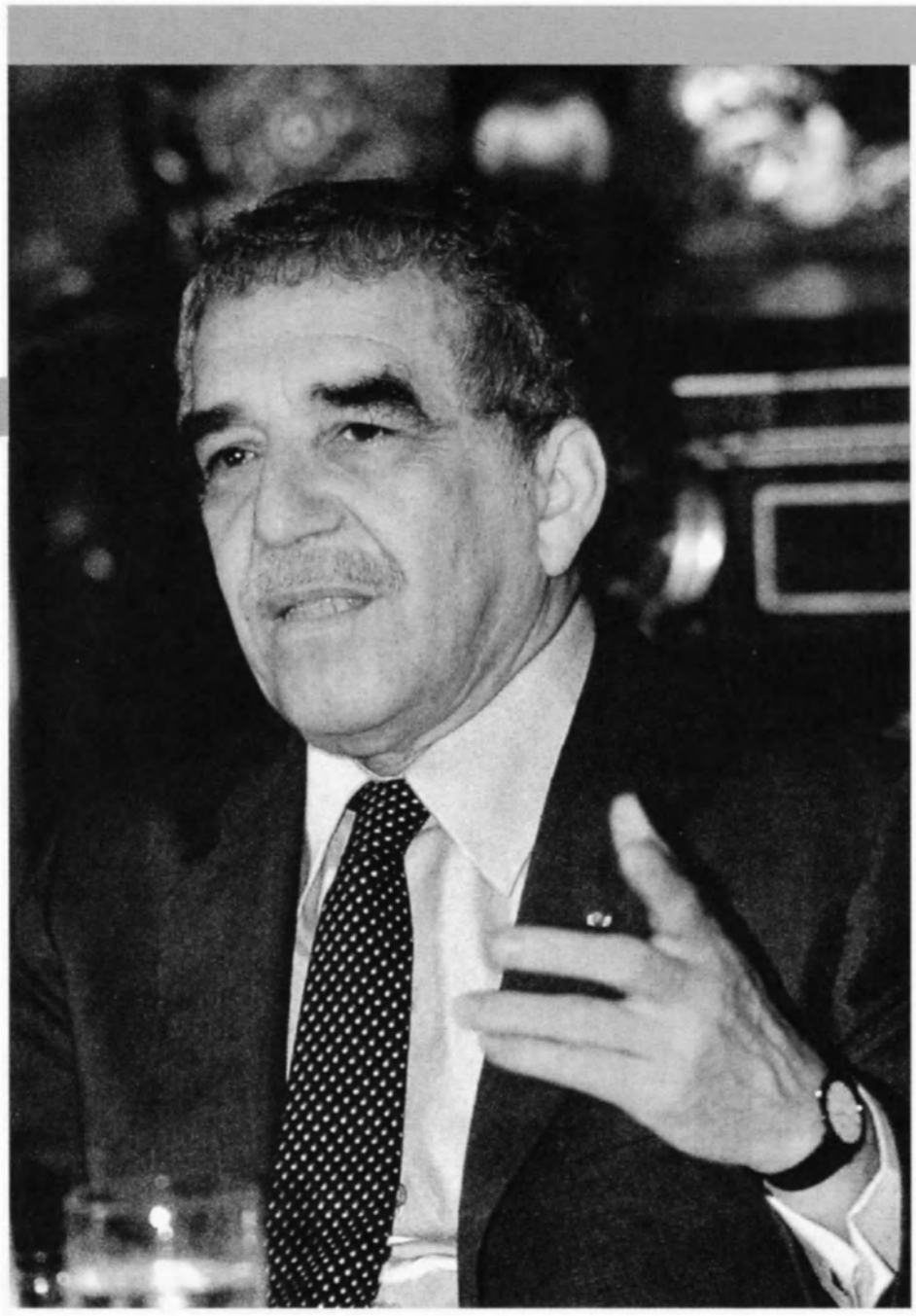
INTERVIEW

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ



Born in the Colombian village of Aracataca in 1929, Gabriel García Márquez made his mark as a master of the modern novel with the publication of *Cien años de soledad* in 1967 (published in English as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1970). His reputation was cemented with the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. In this interview he speaks of his personal vision of Latin America and evokes some of the principal themes of his work, in which elements of fantasy and the marvellous mingle with the most banal reality to give everyday life a mythical and universal dimension.

García Márquez's other major works published in English include *No-one Writes to the Colonel*, (1968), *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1976) and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, (1983). His most recent work is *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

■ *In Latin America different cultures have come together to create something new and rich. Are Latin Americans aware of this intermixing?*

— Speaking for myself, I only became aware of it a few years ago, even though my experience as a writer and my frequent contacts with different societies and political systems have increased my understanding of other aspects of Latin American culture.

When I was travelling in Africa, I noticed similarities between some forms of popular art there and those of various Caribbean countries. That gave me a clearer understanding of our own cultural situation as well as of the relationship between elements of different cultures generally.

Through such insights, you can discover both what is unique and what is universal in a culture. There is a whole network of links between peoples that they may not necessarily be aware of.

■ *Isn't that the starting-point of your novels? Their main theme, even?*

— I wasn't really conscious of the multicultural influence when I was writing them. It came to me of its own accord. It was only afterwards that I realized that almost unintentionally there were elements of this cultural

Interview by Manuel Osorio, Peruvian journalist

In the Caribbean, and in Latin America in general, we consider so-called magical situations part of everyday life

mingling in my work, elements that had crept in gradually as I was writing.

In Latin America various influences have mixed and spread across the continent: Western culture, the African presence, even some Oriental elements, all added to the native, pre-Columbian tradition. That's why I don't think one can talk of a Mexican or Colombian culture as such. Speaking personally, I no longer think of myself as Colombian; first and foremost I am Latin American, and proud of it.

I should add that it's a mistake to think of the history of Latin America as starting with the Spanish conquest. That's a colonial viewpoint. We must never forget that the nations forged by the Spanish viceroys were the results of arbitrary decisions from outside, not of our own special needs.

To understand our current problems, we have to go back to the time before the Conquest. The borders that were drawn between the Latin American countries were only created to manipulate us, and still, whenever there's a need for it, the cry of nationalism goes up. Obviously, that only sets us against one another, stops us from seeing and feeling the problems that we have in common. Each country has its own special circumstances, but what really matters is our underlying common identity.

■ *So is there such a thing as a Latin American culture?*

— I certainly don't think one can say there is a homogeneous Latin American culture. For example in Central America, the Caribbean region, there is an African influence that has resulted in a culture different from that of countries with a sizable indigenous population, like Mexico or Peru. You could make a similar point about many other Latin American countries.

In South America, Venezuela and Colombia have more in common with the Caribbean than with the Andean Indians, even though both countries have an Indian population of their own. In Peru and Ecuador, there is a divergence between the coastal regions and the mountains. Similar situations exist throughout the continent.

These diverse influences come together to give Latin American civilization its special flavour, its uniqueness in relation to the world's other cultures.

■ *What part does Spanish influence play in this context?*

— There's no denying the strength of Spanish influence in Latin America, and of Portuguese influence in Brazil. It is there in every aspect of our lives. We even speak Castilian Spanish.

It is a very rich influence, if also a controversial one that is often disparaged. Even though the heritage is part of our cultural personality, there is a mistrust of everything Spanish in Latin America that complicates everything and seems to me to be excessive and dangerous. As far as I'm concerned, I am proud to have inherited that culture, I'm not ashamed of it in any way. Spanish colonization is no longer a problem today. It's true that we were created in a way from a European overflow, but we're no mere copy of Europe. Latin America is something else again.

■ *Where did the urge to write come from, the storytelling inspiration that gave us* One Hundred Years of Solitude, The Autumn of the Patriarch, Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Love in the Time of Cholera. . . ?

— I think it all comes from nostalgia.

■ *Nostalgia for your childhood? For your country?*

— Nostalgia for my country and for life itself.

I had an extraordinary childhood, surrounded by highly imaginative and superstitious people, people who lived in a misty world populated by phantasms. For instance, my grandmother used quite unselfconsciously to tell me stories at night that would make my hair stand on end.

■ *Your grandfather seems to have been something of a family legend. Did he play an important part in your childhood?*

— He was an enormous old man who seemed to be suspended in time and in memory, and I was very fond of him. He died when I was eight years old, and I was deeply upset. He used to tell me about his life and everything that had happened in the village and the surrounding district since time immemorial. He described in detail the wars he had fought in and the terrible massacres in the banana plantations the year I was born, massacres that left a lasting trace on Colombian history.

■ *Did your mother also influence you as a writer?*

— She's an enchanting woman. When someone asked her about me, what she attributed her son's talent to, she replied without batting an eyelid "Scott's Emulsion".* There's another revealing anecdote. I have several brothers. Well, whenever one of us takes a plane, she lights a candle and says a prayer that everything will be all right. But we're no longer all living at home, and the last time I saw her she told me, "Now I always keep a candle burning, in case one of you takes a plane without my knowing about it".

All my family are very important to me, and they all appear in one way or another in my writings. I never forget that I am the son of an Aracataca postal worker.

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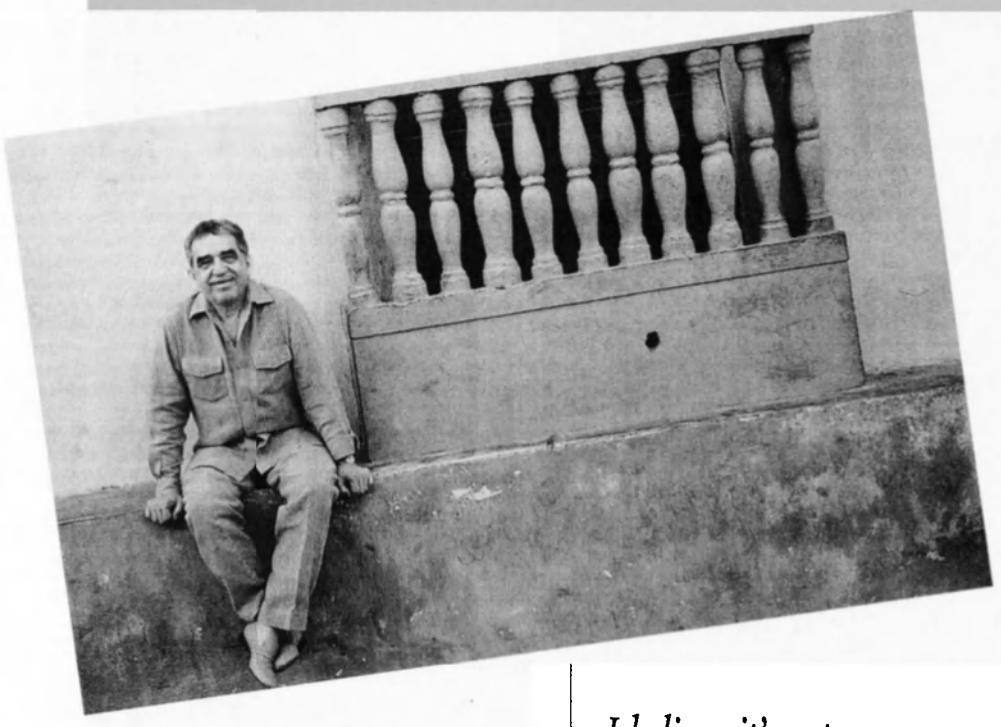
* *A children's tonic.* Editor



Gabriel García Márquez in Cartagena (Colombia).

Life in Tenochtitlán, by the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957) evokes the ancient capital of the Aztecs, built on the site of present-day Mexico City.

■ *Originally you came from the Caribbean, and your books reflect the feverish, overflowing life of the region. Is that where you found the magical realism that has made your work so popular around the world?*

— In the Caribbean there's a perfect symbiosis—well, let's say one more evident than elsewhere—between the people, daily life and the natural world. I grew up in a village hidden away among marshes and virgin forest on the Colombian north coast. The smell of the vegetation there is enough to turn your stomach.

It's a place where the sea passes through every imaginable shade of blue, where cyclones make houses fly away, where villages lie buried under dust and the air burns your lungs. For the Caribbean peoples, natural catastrophe and human tragedy are part of everyday life.

I should add that the area is soaked in myths brought over by the slaves, mixed in with Indian legends and Andalusian imagination. The result is a very special way of looking at things, a conception of life that sees a bit of the marvellous in everything. You find it not just in my novels, but also in the works of Miguel Angel Asturias in Guatemala and Alejo Carpentier in Cuba. There's a supernatural side to things, a kind of reality that ignores the laws of reason, just like in dreams.

I believe it's not too late to build a utopia that would allow us to share an Earth on which no one would take decisions for other people

I once wrote a story about the Pope visiting a remote Colombian village, something that seemed quite impossible at the time. Well, a few years later the Pope visited Colombia.

■ *In view of the influences you've described, the presence of the marvellous throughout your work, do you think critics are justified in describing you as a fantasy writer, as baroque?*

— In the Caribbean, and in Latin America in general, we consider so-called magical situations part of everyday life, like any other aspect of reality. It seems quite natural to us to believe in portents, telepathy, premonitions, a whole host of superstitions and fantastical ways of coming to terms with reality. I never try to explain or justify such phenomena in my books. I see myself as a realist, pure and simple.

■ *The relationship between Europe and Latin America has always been full of unhelpful misunderstandings. Do you think it's necessary to clarify the relationship and to put ill feeling behind us if we are to reach a new equilibrium between North and South?*

— The problems our continent faces are so huge that they prevent us from seeing things clearly, even though we are right in the midst of the situation. So it's not surprising if Europe, absorbed by the spectacle of its own culture, lacks adequate means of understanding us. The Europeans have inherited a great rationalist tradition, and it is only to be

expected that they should constantly judge us by their own criteria, without taking into account the differences that exist at other latitudes. It's not surprising either if they fail to see that the need for prosperity and a sense of identity is felt just as keenly in Latin America, or in Africa and Asia, as it once was in Europe, and still is today. Even so, any attempt to interpret one part of the world using the criteria of another is bound to lead to terrible misunderstandings, and can only entrap people more deeply in alienation, solitude and isolation.

Europe should try to see us in the light of its own past. It's as if the present imbalance has made it lose sight of the vicissitudes of its own history. Who remembers that it took 300 years to build a wall around London? That Rome wasn't built in a day but over many centuries, or that it was an Etruscan king who took Rome into the arena of history? That Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, was bigger than Paris when the conquistadors arrived?

Europeans of vision, people doing their best to create a more just and humane society across their continent, could really help us if they changed their way of judging us. Any real sympathy with our dreams and hopes should take the form of aid for people whose only ambition is to live their own lives in a world where there is a real sense of human brotherhood.

Why shouldn't the southern nations attempt to copy the solutions the Europeans are adopting in Europe, even if the conditions and methods are different?

■ *Do the problems come from inside or outside the continent?*

— I think we have to stop pretending to ourselves that all the violence, misery and dissension that afflicts Latin America is the result of a plot hatched thousands of kilometres away, as if we couldn't imagine any other destiny for ourselves than being at the mercy of the global powers.

Confronted with inequality, oppression, exploitation and neglect, our answer must be life itself. Not even centuries of warfare have dimmed its obstinate affirmation. Forty years ago, William Faulkner refused to accept the possibility that mankind might come to an end. Today we know that what he feared is a straightforward scientific possibility. Given that terrible fact, and the knowledge that the links between nations are stronger than ever before and that a new era is dawning, I believe it's not too late to build a utopia that would allow us to share an Earth on which no one would take decisions for other people, and where people on the margins would be given a fresh chance. A world in which solidarity could become a reality.

■ *It's an aspiration that is reflected in your work, bound as it is to Latin America and an awareness of its destiny.*

— That's right. I don't think one can live with such a nostalgia, try for so long to describe a country or understand a continent, without feeling deeply linked to them, and through them to the entire world. ■

EDITORIAL

In June 1989, the three-master Messager de la ville de Nantes *left the Breton coast to sail to Dakar, Fort-de-France and New York. On board were a dozen young people of different nationalities, aged from twelve to sixteen. They were joined by about fifty more on the island of Gorée, offshore from Dakar, and a third batch boarded the ship in the West Indies.*

The children came from five continents, notably from the regions of the South. The voyage had a twin symbolic purpose: to retrace the old slave route from Africa to America, and to permit joint reflection on the main articles of a projected Convention on the Rights of the Child. At journey's end, the children went to United Nations headquarters in New York to present the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, with a petition they had written, requesting that the project, under consideration since 1959, should finally be ratified.

The Convention, which was eventually adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989, fills a major gap, for hitherto children and young people had no legal rights before reaching the age of majority. This, moreover, is a time when growing numbers of them are deprived of parental protection and the security of a family, being literally thrown out onto the streets as a result of wars, famines, catastrophes or population movements. More insidiously, others suffer as a result of economic changes which tend to destroy community structures and marginalize the poorest and weakest sections of society.

It is important that the international community should give serious attention to the question of the global status of children and should do its best to find a morally and judicially satisfactory solution to the problems posed. In this respect, the voyage of the Messager, *undertaken by youngsters many of whom had themselves endured years of hardship, has great symbolic significance, especially since the venture symbolically linked the misfortunes of today's endangered children with the suffering of slaves in a previous epoch. With the passing of the centuries, the struggle to affirm human dignity has passed into ever younger hands.*

The UNESCO Courier's *contribution to this theme takes the form of case studies from different countries and an analysis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The articles were written by adults; illustrations by children seemed the natural accompaniment.* ■

In Dakar, one of the children who sailed on the *Messager de la ville de Nantes* reads from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The right to be heard

by Michel Manciaux

The child's right to self-expression is now recognized by the international community. How do things stand in practice?

'The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers. . . .'
(Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

It may seem paradoxical to affirm the child's right to speak and be given a hearing, for surely a child is someone who does not know, cannot speak and therefore has no say in matters. Etymologically, the word infant—from the Latin *infans*—implies speechlessness. And even when children do start to talk, adults often reduce them to silence by telling them to be quiet.

The child's right to be heard is also to some extent controversial. Many cultures forbid young people to speak in the presence of their elders for fear of showing lack of respect. The Nigerian psychiatrist Michael Durojaye has drawn attention to the conflict between the rule of silence imposed by family and clan and the encouragement of speech at school.

Nor is the right, in many cases, easy to exercise. The British sociologist Raymond Illsley claims that children from underprivileged backgrounds often come into regular contact with a vocabulary of no more than 300 words, many of which have become distorted through use and have lost much of their original meaning. This language is quite different from that which the school tries to inculcate.

So this is a limited right. There is, after all, not much point in talking if nobody is prepared to listen, and that is the lot of many children, even in cultures that do not challenge their freedom of speech. Adults preoccupied with so-called serious matters simply may not pay attention to the remarks or questions of the young. "Be quiet!" "Later!" "Not now!", they say. But as the Chilean poetess Gabriela Mistral eloquently put it, children cannot wait, their name is "Today".

"In the beginning was the word"

(St. John's Gospel, I-1)

The biblical assertion that "In the beginning was the word" may not literally hold true for children, who do not have the power of speech in early infancy. Yet even before the first vocalizations, babies express themselves non-verbally. For several decades now, child psychologists and paediatricians have been detailing in their works the ability of young babies to communicate with parents and other adult carers through gestures, glances, mimicry, smiles or tears, all of which can convey a wealth of meaning.

If the baby receives even a minimal response, a real process of interaction gets under way, and the ensuing exchanges can be an important factor in the child's development, especially if they take place in a climate of affection. France Straus has shown that a baby only a few days old can vocalize in response to the sounds its mother makes, on condition that there is eye contact and emotional bonding. Once the infant is making baby noises, the first syllables are not far away. Whatever the language may be, the noises are usually taken to represent "Mama" or "Dada", to the delight of parents who are thereby reassured in their family roles.

The days when infants were regarded as glorified digestive tracts, requiring nothing more than feeding, are long gone. But there is still much to be done if they are to be recognized as people in their own right and provided with the best possible conditions for embracing the gift of language.

"The development of language in childhood remains an insoluble mystery", wrote the Flemish poet Stijn Streuvels at the beginning of the century. Although much still remains mysterious about the gift of speech, his statement is no longer entirely true. We now appreciate the crucial importance of the child's linguistic environment. Teaching children to speak involves talking to them, answering their questions and treating them with gentleness, patience and affection.

Many children are slow to learn linguistically. Sometimes the problem is undiagnosed deafness, and a child's hearing capacity should always be checked if there is any unexplained delay. More

often, though, their linguistic development is retarded because people are not talking to them. Many parents fail to understand their children's need for speech, and converse with them too little or not at all. Others stick too long to baby talk, which does not provide their children with the vocabulary necessary for successful socialization. The right to speech necessarily includes the right to be considered worthy to be spoken to, and the family's part in this basic process of education is fundamental and difficult to replace. And this second right subsequently entails another one—being taught to read and write.

A good word is like a tree with solid roots whose branches reach up to heaven. It gives forth fruit in all seasons.

(The Qur'an, Surat XIV, 29-30)

What children say should always be listened to with respect, if not necessarily followed. Their constant questions and requests for information deserve an answer, for that is how children acquire new knowledge.

It is even more important to show consideration when the interests of the children compete or conflict with those of the adults responsible for them, for example in cases of marital breakdown or divorce. Similarly, children should be consulted on questions concerning their health as soon as their age permits—and that can be earlier than many adults imagine. The American philosopher Dan W. Brock has rightly stressed the competence even of young children to make sensible decisions in this field, so long as they are adequately informed and consulted.

Children, then, are often capable of finding the good word of which the Qur'an speaks. It is up to adults to listen to them if they want to talk, to take what they say seriously and to accept their right to express disagreement.

It is good to speak, and better to be silent

(La Fontaine)

The fabulist's maxim is sometimes valid, for children also have the right to be silent. For instance, it is unfair to expect children to act as judges in parental disputes that are painful to them. However well-intentioned they may be, attempts to get them to say which parent is right, or which parent they prefer, may have a traumatizing effect. Real respect for children and their rights entails not overwhelming them with questions and knowing which questions they should not be asked.

Who will speak for children?

In certain cases children who are too young or too involved in a situation whose ramifications they cannot fully understand will need someone to speak for them. The aim is not for this surrogate to replace them as individuals, which no one can do, but to act on their behalf.

Who should speak for children? "A representative or an appppropriate body", says article 12-2 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, a vague formula which has the advantage of leaving a great deal of latitude to the signatory States. Some countries provide something like an advocate in the legal sense of the term. Others favour a mediator who acts as a kind of children's ombudsman. Elsewhere the job may be done by a parent, a relative or some other

***When my world is angry,* by Ari Sindu Prawita, age 15 (Indonesia).**

***Mother says No, No, No!,* by a Norwegian girl, age 13.**

adult, possibly a professional, whom the child trusts. The main thing is to ensure that the child has "the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child".

"An extraordinary hope for human rights"

(Hélène Dorlhac, France's Secretary of State with responsibility for the Family)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a victory for all the world's children. It recognizes for every child "who is capable of forming his or her own views" the "right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child" (article 12 - 1), "the right to freedom of expression" (article 13 -1), and "to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (article 14 - 1). Article 17 underlines the importance of giving children access, through the mass media, "to information and material of social and cultural benefit" to them—an essential condition if they are to express themselves in a manner that is well-informed and free.

Education provides the tools of knowledge and the child's right to education is solemnly affirmed by articles 28-31 of the Convention. But according to the details spelled out in article 28, education only seems to begin with "primary education compulsory and available free to all". Schooling from an early age is obviously essential, even though it is far from being achieved in a world where, according to the preamble to the World Declaration on Education for All which was adopted at the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien (Thailand) in March 1990, more than 100 million children, most of them girls, have no access to primary schooling, and where almost one billion adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate.

Nevertheless, the learning process must begin earlier than that. The business of learning to speak, without which the right to education does not exist, must get under way in the first months of life.

"Education for all, a priority for the planet"

(Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO)

The right to speak will remain a dead letter until education from an early age becomes a fact. UNESCO made this point forcefully at the World Conference on Education for All. Article 5 of of the World Declaration states that "Learning begins at birth" and that the "initial education" can be provided "through arrangements involving families, communities or institutional programmes, according to need". It is a good thing to highlight the all-important role of the family. A child cannot have any real right to speak unless this right is established and recognized early on. As well as being the first people to speak for the child, the parents are also those who can and must help it to learn to find and freely use its own voice.

Parents are the prime movers in their children's education. Their power is very real, but sometimes they may not be up to the job, either because no one has helped them to develop their capacities to help their children, because there is no opportunity for them to use their skills or, most seriously of all, because their power is undermined by professional child-care experts or by the society in which they live.

Failure to develop and use parental capabilities is a terrible waste. Helping parents to discover, develop and apply their skills is undoubtedly the best way of establishing their children's right to speak. ■

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Children of the streets

by Flor Romero

Adrift in the world's great cities, millions of young people live, sleep, and sometimes have children of their own

Untitled, by Dolores Rocha Sánchez, age 4 (Mexico).

WHO are they, the children who haunt the streets of our big cities? Where do they come from, those streetwise juvenile hippies whose very existence municipalities do their best to conceal?

Underage urban guerrillas, some people call them. Self-raised, they live on next to nothing.

Street children have always been with us, their presence recorded in such novels as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables.* What is new today is the scale of the problem.

One hardly dares guess how many hundreds of thousands of street children there are in the world's capitals, swarming like flies around the passers-by begging for hand-outs. They first appeared in Latin America thirty years ago. They made their entrance on the streets as shoe-shine boys or newspaper-sellers, then never left, drawn to the pavements as if by magnetic attraction and unwilling to leave them to go home.

In fact many of them have nowhere else to go. Typically they come from broken homes: they are the offspring of single mothers, or of wife-beating fathers who cruelly mistreat their own families. Home for them is hell, a den of poverty where there is little money for food and even less to pay for school equipment or bus fares.

Worn out by looking after the home and the children, their mothers struggle to feed them, and can only watch helplessly when they take to the streets. Their fathers bring home next to nothing, and their rage at working so hard for so little makes their rule over the household all the more brutal.

THE OFFSPRING OF POVERTY

Abandoned children are the offspring of poverty. Impoverished communities that cannot look after their children simply leave them to the streets.

One would think that no society could have any goal more important than to take care of its young, to educate them and provide for their future, to take pains to form them into citizens healthy in body and mind. Yet that is evidently not the case, since the problems of coping with street children are often left to religious organizations and charitable institutions.

The grim truth is that the poorest developing nations face so many other problems that they

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have neither the time nor the means to protect their young.

When Pope Paul VI announced his intention to visit Bogotá in 1968, the city authorities took it upon themselves, as part of the feverish preparations for his arrival, to round up all the youngsters at large in the city's streets and lock them in the Santamaría amphitheatre. They did not want the Supreme Pontiff to discover that in a Catholic country there were children wandering the streets begging for bread and stealing from shops, or simply looking for a newspaper or a cardboard box to cover them for the night. They wanted to hide the realities of Colombian childhood from the Pope. At least they felt ashamed of the situation, and that was something in itself.

ON THE STREETS

Anything from three to eighteen years old, these ragamuffins wander the thoroughfares of the big cities, importuning passers-by. Up to all kinds of mischief, they heedlessly put off all thought of settling down until they have grown up, when they may change their ways but may equally well persist in their delinquency, a course for which their lengthy schooling in insolence and indolence naturally prepares them.

It is instructive to strike up a conversation with a Bogotá street urchin.

"Why do you keep moving around?"

"I have to keep moving, otherwise my mother will find me."

"What do you want to do when you grow up?"

"Have lots of money to give to my mother and my brothers and sisters."

Such children are always on the move. Tireless vagabonds constantly en route from one place to another, they scour the town hanging from the back of buses. Most talk fondly of their mothers; they want to protect them, to console them for the loss of the fathers they never knew or against the stepfathers who beat

The Junior Red Cross in San Salvador, **by Mirtala Francisca Guevara Zelaya, age 15 (El Salvador).**

them. As the conversation suggests, their greatest ambition is often to support their mothers. They talk of them as though they were saints.

"She came from Medellin," one of them told me. "She used to work in a café, but she didn't earn enough to feed us two kids. They wanted her to have us adopted, but she refused. She decided to come to Bogotá instead. I think she and dad used to quarrel, and that's why they split up after five years together. She met Raúl Rocha here. He likes her, but I get on his nerves. He used to tell me off or punish me every chance he got. That's why I left the house."

"I'm nine years old, and I've already been in several reform schools," he went on. "At the Redeemer, we used to call the streets *lleca* (an anagram of the word *calle*, Spanish for "street"). The *lleca* is something else; it's our home. During the day, we're on the lookout for the police, but at night it's great. We sleep snuggled up head to toe to keep warm. Me, I'm with the Grand Gautier mob. I feel safe and strong with them, I'm not afraid of anything."

Street children cannot survive on their own, so they naturally form gangs. They devise their own special languages for protection, if not by rearranging words then by a secret vocabulary of gestures, cries, whistles or grimaces. They give each other aliases so they won't be recognized: Stoneface, Eagle Eye, Rat, Rabbit, never their real names.

As agile physically as they are mentally, they are extremely adroit, and can whip off a windscreen-wiper or remove a tyre in the twinkling of an eye. Their manual dexterity is amazing.

Because chance rules their lives, they are superstitious. There are streets they will not venture into and words they will not utter. They do not "work" on Sundays, because it's bad luck: instead, they play football with their friends, sleep, bathe in any pool they can find or go to the cinema with their girlfriends, who are generally street-dwellers like themselves.

Untitled,
by Mercedes Castillo, age 13 (Guatemala).

"MY KIDS WILL GO TO SCHOOL AND LEARN A TRADE"

For there are girls on the streets too, though not as many as the boys. They sleep under bridges or between sewage outlets, doing what they can to avoid selling their bodies. They may have run away because they had been punished, or to escape harrassment by fathers, brothers, cousins or uncles. But it usually isn't long before they turn to prostitution.

Listen to the old newspaper seller: "Not that one, not her". "Why not, if she's the one I want?" the man replies. "Someone's looking after her. Don't forget these girls have boyfriends to buy them presents and take them to the cinema. You shouldn't touch a gang-leader's girl."

Her cousin Theresa had already had two kids by the time she was sixteen, and they lived with her in the street. Two restless babies the street children looked after, taking turns to give them the bottle.

The girls are just as unruly as the boys, whose behaviour they ape, but even though they beg and sometimes steal they are less aggressive. Only rarely would they snatch a handbag; more often they are the lookouts, warning their companions when danger is approaching.

They are more docile than the boys, and it is easier to persuade them to learn a trade. You can find girls who have left the street sewing, embroidering, weaving or working as shop assistants. They try to get a regular roof over their heads, above all to protect their children.

"I wouldn't let my kids go on the streets for anything in the world," one of them told me recently. "I'd make sacrifices, I'd work till I dropped for them not to want what I never had. My kids will go to school and learn a trade. You can count on that." ■

Children in gangs

by Carl Rogers

The tragedy of inner-city youth drawn into delinquency and drug trafficking

Drugs, by Ewa Szydtowska, age 18 (Poland).

THE 1980s witnessed the explosive resurgence of an historic American urban social problem: children and youth in gangs. From New York to Los Angeles, from Chicago to Miami, over forty-five American cities have an identified youth gang problem.

The number of youth gangs in the United States is on the rise and their involvement in the drug trade is resulting in dramatic increases in gang-related violence—including homicide—and arrests for criminal activities in almost every American city. The scope and the nature of the problem vary widely from city to city, but it has been estimated that over 50,000 children and youths are gang members in the city of Los Angeles and that there are over 600 youth gangs in California alone.

Popularized in the 1950s musical *West Side Story*, youth gangs have been a recurring social problem in U.S. cities at least since the second half of the nineteenth century. Their emergence and growth, primarily in poor, urban neighbourhoods, were frequently fuelled by successive waves of immigrants arriving in the United States, and were symptomatic of the problems these groups encountered in trying to adapt to a new and at times radically different culture. Today many youth gangs continue to reflect the difficulties of assimilation of immigrant populations.

Youth gangs are usually defined as groups of young people who frequently engage in illegal activity on a group basis. They are usually territorial in nature, identifying with a particular neighbourhood and protecting their "turf" from encroachment by other gangs. Better organized gangs often control economically motivated crime such as burglary, extortion or drug-trafficking at the neighbourhood level. They may also sell "protection" from criminal activity to legitimate merchants. Youth gangs usually identify themselves by a name ("Crips", and "Bloods" are the names of two Los Angeles-based gangs), and may further distinguish themselves by a particular style or colour of clothing, by use of symbols, or by wearing certain kinds of jewellery.

A MILLION DOLLARS A WEEK FROM CRACK

The recent dynamic growth of youth gangs and related violence is directly attributed by most sources to the increased sale of cocaine, particularly in the form known as "rock" or "crack". This lucrative illegal activity is helping to transform gangs into drug trafficking criminal organizations. In 1988 Los Angeles police officials acknowledged that they were aware of at least four gangs in their city grossing over $1,000,000 per week through the sale of cocaine. A recent article in the U.S. magazine *Time* ironically noted that the crack cocaine trade may be one of the biggest job programmes for inner city youth in the United States.

Graffiti on New York subway cars.

One reason why children become involved in drug trafficking is that the laws governing juvenile crime are more lenient than those governing adult crime. Ironically, as the U.S. "war on drugs" has intensified, with both increasing arrests for drug trafficking and more severe penalties for adults convicted of drug-related crime, the value of youth gang members has increased. While an adult convicted of selling drugs in most states is subject to a mandatory prison sentence of anywhere from two years to life imprisonment, a young person under the age of eighteen will seldom be committed to a correctional facility for a first offence, and even if committed is not subject to mandatory sentence lengths. It has become both increasingly profitable and safer for adult criminals to enroll children and youths in the drug trafficking business.

PEEWEES AND WANNABEES

The average age of youth gang members continues to decline. Most experts place the figure at around thirteen to fifteen years of age, while law enforcement officials in Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities note that children as young as nine or ten years are frequently found in today's gangs. These young recruits, often called "peewees" (slang for little members) or "wannabees" (slang for "want to be" gang members), become casually involved with older gang members who live in their neighbourhood, attend their school, or are members of their own families. Initially, younger children may be asked to perform "favours" for older gang members—to watch for police in the neighbourhood, or to deliver packages which may contain drugs, money or weapons. In exchange, the children often receive expensive gifts or money.

As they demonstrate their trustworthiness and reliability, these children assume more difficult and more dangerous roles. Children as young as ten or eleven years of age are frequently involved in gang-related drug trafficking. Younger children are routinely employed as "spotters" watching and reporting on police activity in their neighbourhood to other gang members, as "weapons carriers" for older gang members, or in other roles, and earn anywhere from $200 per week to $100 per day. "Runners", usually slightly older children, may earn up to $300 per day keeping street corner dealers supplied with drugs from a hidden cache. Enterprising youths as young as fifteen or sixteen may advance to the level of street corner dealers, routinely earning between $400 and $1,000 per day. In a particularly good market such as New York City, authorities indicate that dealers can make up to $3,000 per day.

Few dealers, however, work full time, and two different studies in Washington, D.C. would suggest that a street corner dealer's average earnings are more likely to be in the range of $4,000 to $7,000 per month. In contrast, most states in the U.S. set a minimum employment age of sixteen years, and most legal entry-level jobs

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available to young people pay less than $40 per day, or approximately $800 per month.

Once a child is involved with a gang, it may be virtually impossible for him to quit. Gang membership usually leads to truancy and ultimately dropping out of school, closing off escape from a criminal lifestyle through education. The gang member also finds it difficult to give up a more lucrative lifestyle in exchange for unemployment or employment at minimum wage.

The gang member who attempts to quit is also subject to social pressures to continue his or her involvement. At best, attempting to leave the gang may lead to social ostracism; at worst it may lead to direct intimidation.

IMPOVERISHED INNER-CITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

To truly understand the youth gang problem it is important to understand the social context within which the gangs emerge. First, they are almost universally a product of impoverished urban neighbourhoods, where unemployment routinely exceeds 20 per cent of the workforce and in some cases exceeds 50 per cent. Families consist overwhelmingly of single mothers with children and often rely primarily on public assistance for their livelihood. Nationally, 20 per cent of all children in the United States live in families at or below the established federal poverty level. In many inner-city neighbourhoods this figure approaches 100 per cent. These communities are characterized by generally high crime rates, limited legitimate business activity or employment opportunities, and poorly functioning public education systems.

In contrast to the phenomenon of street children in many Third World countries, or to the problem of runaway or "throwaway" children (children, usually teenagers, expelled from their homes by their parents), most youth gang members live at home with their families. Some parents actively support their child's gang involvement or are totally indifferent, but most parents do care. Even the best intentioned parent, however, can find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep his or her child from becoming involved with a local gang. Every neighbourhood has its history of gang revenge against individual children or their families for resisting the gang. The combined factors of intimidation on the one hand and some financial support on the other eventually result in tacit collusion on the part of these parents. An uneasy truce develops where the parent, while not condoning or supporting the child's gang involvement, nonetheless does little to try to stop this involvement and welcomes the child's periodic financial contributions to the family budget.

So far, the overall public policy approach to this social problem has focused on three broad strategies: suppression of drug use and drug trafficking; suppression of youth gangs; and prevention of youth involvement in gangs. To date, while national statistics suggest an overall decline in the use of illegal drugs, this decline appears to have had little effect on the growth of the gangs or on the frequency of gang-related violence. Similarly, attempts at direct suppression of the gangs through law enforcement activities appear to have had limited effects, despite the mobilization of extensive resources. It is argued by many, however, that these efforts have slowed the growth and spread of gangs. Alternatively, some have suggested that efforts at gang suppression through arrest and detention of gang members actually lead to increased levels of gang-related violence as other gangs compete for control of territories once controlled by the suppressed gang.

Most experts agree that the only viable long-term solution to the problem is to prevent children and youths from getting involved in gangs in the first place. Most current programmes seek to provide support for high-risk children and their families. They focus on children between the ages of six and fourteen, since it appears to be generally agreed that prevention efforts must begin before young people develop well-established patterns of delinquent behaviour or become seriously involved with gangs. Key elements in many of these programmes include the provision of social and recreational activities, and educational assistance, as well as efforts to prevent the children from dropping out of school and to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. The success of prevention efforts ultimately depends on whether these children and young people have a sense of hope in their own future and a belief that through their own efforts they can lead useful, productive lives. ■

Graffiti by Axone, age 19 (Paris).

Africa's lost generation

Poverty and economic crisis, hunger and homelessness, epidemics, illiteracy and environmental degradation are taking a terrible toll of the continent's youth

In November 1990 a seminar was held under the auspices of UNICEF and UNESCO at Cotonou (Benin) to discuss the problems of children in difficult circumstances. It was attended by representatives of twenty African countries and delegates of non-governmental and international organizations who exchanged views and experiences. The picture that emerged from the discussions was distressing. Some of its main features are sketched in this extract from the final report.

THE vast majority of the street children are boys. This does not mean that girls are not also at risk, but their situation is different. Some turn to prostitution at an early age. Others are single mothers and face many material, emotional and social problems. Others take jobs in domestic service, or are sold into it, and are frequently exploited or mistreated. So while girls may be less visible than boys in the danger areas, their problems are as great.

It is difficult to find out the exact ages of the children concerned. Since they are illiterate and have no family connections or identity papers, the ages they give must be regarded as approximate. Nevertheless, various sources of information suggest that their ages range from seven to twenty-five years. In several countries, more than half are aged between thirteen and eighteen.

Their backgrounds vary from country to country and according to the category to which they belong (young workers, street children, unoccupied children from poor districts). Many of them come from rural areas. This is the case of the *talibés*, street beggars who complain that they live far from their families. These children can go for five to ten years without seeing their home village.

Children who have never gone to school rub shoulders in the streets with others who have dropped out. The latter constitute the majority in most of the countries represented at the Cotonou seminar. Most of these children never finished primary schooling, though some have a few years of secondary education behind them. Poverty is the usual reason for dropping out of school, though sometimes poor grades are also a factor.

To survive and feed their families, the children turn their hands to a whole range of activities whose economic significance is usually undervalued. But the little money they make is not enough to meet their needs, especially since much of it often goes to their families, or else to their guardians or a gang-leader.

BASIC NEEDS

Street children, like the children of the poorer districts generally, are almost always ill-fed. Some survive on barely one meal a day; others get by on scraps from restaurants or by scavenging from dustbins. In one group studied, the children used drugs to suppress their hunger. Generally speaking, drug use is quite widespread on the streets, and it is thought that hard drugs are becoming more popular.

The lack of hygiene in their lives—which in the case of those who beg may be deliberate, to inspire pity—increases the chances that cuts and scrapes picked up in the streets, where accidents and assaults are all too common, will become infected. It is hard for street children to go to dispensaries, partly because of the cost but also as a result of their own embarrassment and the reception they are likely to get. The young are particularly vulnerable to sexually-transmitted diseases, especially AIDS, about which they know very little.

As far as education is concerned, "the children and young people on the streets are exposed to a whole host of different and sometimes contradictory influences," said one participant in the seminar. "This predisposes them to a disturbed adult life, marked by personal and social problems they never leave behind them."

Children who have never been to school generally want to go, and often go to great lengths to achieve their wish. Most of those who have, however, have grown tired of schooling. Like the youth of the poorer quarters generally, many of the street children express a wish for some sort of occupational training that would enable them to work as drivers, welders, tailors and in similar occupations.

Giriama children pounding millet, by Suril P. Patel, age 11 (Kenya).

As for games, sports and leisure activities, their needs are very poorly provided for. Many seek refuge in the cinema, and what they see there usually does little to help them come to terms with the difficult world they live in. The lack of leisure and sports facilities is yet another problem confronting the children of the streets and slums.

THE POVERTY TRAP

"The causes of the tragedy," according to another participant in the Cotonou seminar, "are many and various. They include the economic recession and the steady fall in the price of the raw materials that form the mainstay of our economies, at a time when the cost of the manufactured products we need to import from the industrialized world at our present stage of development has soared. Reduced amounts of money are reaching us, and as a result of high interest rates, merely servicing our large external debts absorbs up to a third or more of our export earnings. . . . In short, we have lower revenues and less to live on; we are experiencing an accelerating downward spiral into poverty."

Recent studies have shown that the programmes of structural adjustment that various African countries have agreed to undertake have made things worse for the most vulnerable sections of the population, whose purchasing power is constantly falling.

Increasing poverty has forced some parents

Carnival,
by Tolulope Adeyeuri,
age 13 (Nigeria).

to use their children as subsistence earners. There is evidence that the number of street children increases where there is high unemployment. Child labour reinforces the vicious circle of poverty, for most working children come from impecunious families, whether in the towns or the countryside.

Yet economic problems do not explain everything. The break-up of traditional patterns of social and community life also lies at the heart of the problem.

Many observers refer to the crisis in the family, the reason most often given by the street children themselves to explain their decision to leave home. The growing number of divorces, the increase in single-parent households and the destruction of the old family structures are all familiar themes in any analysis of the problem.

Another factor is the erosion—disappearance might not be too strong a word—of traditional African values, which in many cases has left a gap that has not been filled.

The perception of the child's place in society has changed radically. From being at the hub of life in traditional societies, children have now become for many families a means of survival, their labour something to be farmed out and exploited. As the bonds linking families, communities and regions have been loosened, children and adolescents have increasingly turned to street gangs to find the love and friendship otherwise missing from their lives. One young man made the point eloquently when he said, "There was only one place where I felt any solidarity, and that was the street".

Some surviving customs that once formed part of social and economic life only make things worse today. Forced marriage at an early age now contributes to the spread of divorce. The so-called "geographical polygamy" practiced in African towns creates tensions and often results in a lack of paternal authority, creating insecurities in children for whom school does not provide the framework of discipline they so badly need.

THE NEED FOR POSITIVE THINKING

On top of everything else, these children have an image problem. The disturbing idea that people have of them makes it harder to reintegrate them into their families and society as a whole. So it is important to stress another aspect of their lives: the range of skills they display daily. They show great ingenuity in exploiting the opportunities and resources of the street to earn a living, and in so doing demonstrate much more initiative than many adults locked into a daily routine. In addition, they often possess manual skills that would be the envy of apprentices in any trade, and establish dynamic networks of relationships that provide both solidarity and mutual aid.

One underprivileged child employed in a workshop making toys for day-care centres spoke for all his peers when he told an interviewer: "I don't know very much, it's true, but I can still show someone else what I do. Then he could show a third person if he wanted. That way, you'd end up with no one left to say, 'I don't know anything'."

Whether handicapped, abandoned or orphaned, holding down a job or living in the streets, these children seek the respect due to people who count upon themselves and can in turn be counted upon. They need to be able to make some practical contribution to their family, their gang, their village, their community—and themselves. They want to have friends and families and a normal love life, to be treated like anyone else. In short, they want their place in the social contract, along with the rest of humankind. ■

Paula Li, Mohammed and their friends

by Ana Vásquez

The foundations of tomorrow's multicultural Europe are being laid in primary schools across the continent

"We speak Arabic and French at home."

"At our place we speak Chinese with our parents, but my brother and I talk in French."

"I've got a Spanish grandfather, and I've already picked up a few words from him."

This conversation between Mohammed, Paula Li and Véronique, three French schoolchildren not yet twelve years old, illustrates a situation that is becoming increasingly common in the schools of Western Europe's main urban and industrial centres. In Liverpool and Liège, Gottingen, Geneva and Lyons, changes in the so-called migrant population are altering the traditional nature of the school enrolment. With this in mind, my colleagues and I have for the past three years been studying the social interaction between pupils, both French and foreign, in a state primary school in a working-class district of Paris.

WHO IS FRENCH AND WHO IS FOREIGN?

What makes a child foreign? Of those considered as such in the class we were studying, 70 per cent were born in France and 85 per cent had attended local kindergartens, and so, from the age of three or four, had gone through the normal process of socialization provided by the French school system. As for the parents, most had lived in France for at least ten years. This shows how ambiguous the term "foreigner" can be. It is always hard to know whether it refers to place of birth, to family culture, to a value system acquired in childhood, or simply to an unconsciously accepted set of stereotypes.

As Paula Li explained to her friends, she speaks Chinese with her parents but French with her brother. Mohammed speaks Arabic at home. Both, in other words, continue to speak their parents' language while also mastering French. The same was true of almost all the children of foreigners in the class. All but one of them (a girl who had recently arrived from Haiti) spoke French at school without any noticeable accent and even when playing.

This situation had an effect on the children whose parents were French, as Véronique's comment indicates. Her conversation with Paula Li and Mohammed took place when the pupils were asked to say what languages they spoke at home. Véronique felt that she too ought to come up with a foreign relative—in her case a Spanish grandfather—to show that she was learning another language than French.

Her reaction is significant in two ways. First, it indicates that speaking another language at home is not necessarily demeaning. But it also suggests that the issues raised are global, and that the problem is not so much one of the integration of foreign children as of a new situation common to all young people, no matter where their parents come from, in which questions of ethnic identity and difference are everyone's concern.

Who do these children play with and how do

My classmates as animals, by Sylvia Voss, age 8 (Germany).

they choose their friends? In the course of our three years of observation at the school, the composition of some of the playgroups remained stable, but the children receiving the most widespread acceptance or rejection did not stay the same.

Ethnic origin was not the main factor in the choice of playmates; other criteria influenced the forming and breaking up of groups. The children explained their choice of friends, whether for play, study or discussion, in terms of likes and dislikes, sentiments they could not clarify further. Paula Li was voted the most popular pupil, and Mohammed and another boy named Hubert were the least. This was not the case at the start of our study, when Paula was not very well-liked. She was shy and uncommunicative but eventually developed new qualities, notably a capacity for study and a serious approach to life. The result was that many children trusted her, not only when it came to work or discussion, but also at playtime, for she was scrupulously honest.

HOSTILITY TO FOREIGNERS

In the course of our study, we noted only one case of aggressive behaviour towards a foreign-born child.

The dispute took place between Hubert and Mohammed in the course of a school outing. These two pupils aroused the most negative feelings among their schoolmates, and although very different in personality both had serious problems in relating to other people. Mohammed was talkative and sometimes very funny, but also anxious and often unstable. He could attract a group around him, but then usually irritated the others and reacted aggressively to their displeasure. Hubert, on the other hand, was a loner, reserved, unfriendly and often bad-tempered at play.

The two began to squabble during a visit to a museum. Both wanted to be closest to the guide and the objects on display. On the way back to school they started a fight over a seat, which Mohammed eventually won. Hubert then began to chant in an undertone racist slogans about Mohammed the Arab, the foreigner, someone stupid and ridiculous.

Their schoolfellows, half of them children of foreigners themselves, seemed confused and said nothing. Not knowing how to react, they simply moved away from the disputants. Mohammed lost his temper. After telling Hubert to shut up two or three times, he dug himself down into his seat. The whole episode only lasted for a few minutes until the mistress in charge, realizing that something was going on, came up to the group and made Hubert shut up.

Children of Mindo,
by Lusmira del Valdes Baeza, age 12 (Chile).

The incident was significant in several ways. In situations where different ethnic groups mix together, it is easy for interpersonal conflicts to take on racist overtones. Offensive remarks of the kind that were made are of course never harmless, but in this case they served to mask the difficulties in relating to others experienced by the two boys, especially Hubert. Hurt, Mohammed was incapable of defending himself as he normally would have, whether by words or blows. The attitude of the other pupils showed how disturbing this kind of aggression is for children of their age. The only way they could find of expressing their distaste was to move away. It is also worth noting that the scene took place out of the classroom, where the schoolmistress is always in charge.

The teacher was aware of these problems, and had often stressed, both in her lessons and in her attitudes, the importance of respect for others. In this case, she simply told Hubert to stop chanting, and stayed close to Mohammed without

Néryal's drawing (see article).

saying anything further. Back at school, she neither reprimanded nor punished Hubert, but she did change the work schedule so as to be able to talk about the need for mutual respect between peoples. She took time to speak of the cultural and scientific achievements of the world's different peoples, specifically mentioning the Arab invention of algebra. Later in the year, she also organized other activities with the same aim.

WHO AM I?

We also had to find out how the children see themselves. Through games and questionnaires concerning their qualities and defects, we obtained several self-portraits of the pupils.

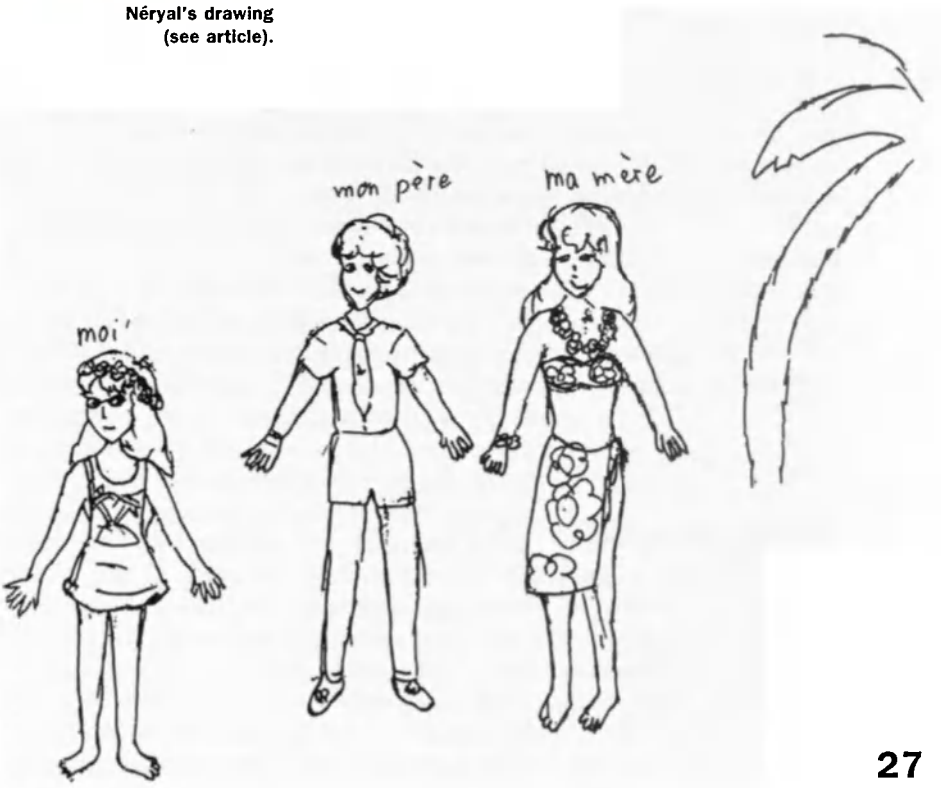
Knowing how adult immigrants react to this kind of enquiry, one would have expected national origin to have figured prominently in the responses, and skin colour or the shape of the eyes to have been seen as dominant physical traits. Yet only one of the children mentioned ethnic origin, and the same was true of skin colour, and then only as part of a list ("I am: black, black-haired, dark-brown eyes, I can run very fast.")

Even so, the influence of different cultures did show through to some extent in the students' attitude to beauty. Among the children of French parents, it was the girls who called themselves beautiful or said that they had beautiful hair or eyes, while among those from North African backgrounds it was more likely to be the boys. There was not enough evidence, however, on which to base a definite conclusion.

The qualities and defects the pupils considered important reflected the same influence. Some attributes were seen either as positive or negative, depending on family background and values. For some of the children the word "patient" had good connotations, for others bad, and the same was true for "obstinate", "ambitious" and "inquisitive". All the children considered wearing spectacles a significant physical trait, while other characteristics such as big or small and fat or thin were often overlooked. The conclusion seems to be that in a multicultural environment ethnic origin is less important than other traits in forming an individual's self-image.

DESIRES AND DREAMS

In order to understand how the children saw their place in French society, we had to explore their desires. We devised a drawing game in which the pupils were asked to imagine a situation other



than that familiar to them in daily life. By requesting them to show their ideal of family life, we hoped to gain an understanding of the ties binding the foreigners' children to the land and culture of their parents.

Confronted with real-life problems, individuals often seek to escape into an imaginary never-neverland. In the case of adult immigrants (and foreigners in general), this usually takes the form of the country they have left behind, seen in an idealized light. The same holds true of interpersonal ties. There is a tendency to romanticize the way things were before the old country was left behind.

Paula Li's drawing (see article).

What we learned from the children, however, was that, regardless of their place of origin, they shared a common dream of a luxurious and exotic retreat in which they could live like millionaires on a permanent holiday close to nature. In their ideas of happiness and their aspirations to greater well-being and comfort, they all looked to similar models, drawn in large part from the media.

Two drawings were especially revealing. Paula Li showed her family in a huge, luxurious mansion. While she played with her little sister, her mother read and sunbathed by the swimming-pool, her brother swam, and her father lay on an inflatable mattress with a drink by his side. Perhaps this vision of comfort and luxury was shared by her parents, who both worked hard and lived in confined surroundings.

A girl called Néryal was less specific. In her drawing, the tip of a palm-tree sufficed to indicate that the scene lay somewhere far away, in a tourist-brochure version of the tropics. But there was nothing ambiguous about the way in which she portrayed her family. Her sister disappeared entirely and Néryal, easily recognizable by her spectacles, appeared as an only child. Even more striking were the changes made to her family, in real life extremely conservative in their dress and style. She removed her father's moustache and depicted him in tie and shorts, a symbolic image of the ideal father on the perfect holiday. The woman with him looked totally different from Néryal's own mother, indicating how feminine role-models can change in the course of long-term social displacement.

It would be wrong to conclude that the children had no interests or values in life other than material comfort. Paula Li was one of the most promising pupils in the class, and also, as we have seen, one of the most popular. Néryal was a hard worker who had made steady progress and she talked of joining the medical charity Médecins sans Frontières. ("I want to help poor people. . . . Thousands of people are dying of hunger, and I want to stop them from dying that way.")

Despite the fact that they had grown up in a district where the foreign population was large and mixed, all the children in the class had imbibed the same values and role-models as French children from the same background: they did not consider themselves as foreign, or even different. And their ambitions were centred on the land where they now lived. Some of them obviously could expect to encounter difficulties in the course of their school careers, but they would be the same as those confronting their French counterparts.

More important than ethnic origin, the lifestyle and academic level of the children's parents, on the other hand, did appear to have had a real influence on how well each was doing at school. The children's own level of curiosity and interest had also to be taken into account, as did the amount of family support from which they had benefited.

THE SCHOOL AS A PLACE OF SOCIALIZATION

In France, the school provides all children with a set of models and norms that contribute to the socialization process and help new generations to learn to live in society. For children whose parents are French, the values expressed are largely those encountered within the family, although there may be some divergences in different social classes from what is taught at school.

In the case of foreign children, the role of the school is even more crucial. It is there that they learn the language and become familiar with routines and habits that form a kind of cultural imprint, affecting such matters as rules of politeness, table manners, and the organization of time. School also provides a setting outside the family circle in which they can meet other local people, both children and adults, French and foreign-born. It is a place where the pupils can establish social relationships of their own.

It is largely because they have spent so many years at school that these children can succeed, without too many shocks, in crossing the cultural divide and participating in the social life of the land in which they live. In many European countries, this new generation of under-twelves is laying the foundations of the multicultural society of the 1990s. ■

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Stress at an early age

by Tariho Fukuda

Angst, by Sabine Wagner, age 13 (Germany).

NOBORU is an ordinary ten-year-old Japanese schoolboy. His typical school day is much the same as that of thousands of other children like him. His mother Chiako wakes him up at seven, saying: "Get up, son, your father is about to leave for work." Noboru gets out of bed reluctantly because he is still feeling sleepy, but he knows he must greet his father, who had not arrived home when Noboru went to bed at eleven the night before.

His father, Takeo, who has been working for an international company for many years, says to Noboru as he is leaving:

"Good morning Noboru, how are you? Did you study hard yesterday?"

"Yes. I think so, father."

"Keep it up and do your best. I'll see you later."

When the stereotyped words of their morning ritual have been spoken, Takeo closes the door behind him. Noboru wishes he could talk to his father more often, but he knows how busy Takeo is. Even on Sundays he often has to leave the house early to go and entertain his customers on the golf course.

Noboru has breakfast with his mother, who asks him the same questions, wanting to know who in his class at school and at the *Jyuku* or prep school he attends in the evenings got the best marks in mathematics. She gets him so upset that he refuses to answer.

AT HOME ALONE

In April last year Chiako asked her son if he wanted to attend a good prep school not far from home after regular school hours. Noboru accepted, knowing full well that most of his classmates were attending evening classes of this kind in order to prepare for the highly competitive entrance exams into junior high school. So for the past year, four days a week, Noboru has been

going to evening classes and not particularly enjoying it. But he also knows that his parents hope that he will get into a good private junior high school. If he does, he will not have to take any other entrance exams before going to university. He tries to persuade himself that this, as his parents have suggested, is the ideal solution . . . but he is not convinced.

Noboru was surprised that his mother took a job as an insurance agent when he began to attend his Jyuku. Chieko explained that she was working to pay for the extra school tuition, and so now he feels more indebted to his mother than ever. And no matter how much she insists that the flexible hours enable her to spend more time with him, the truth is that Noboru, like many other Japanese children, returns to an empty home when he finishes school.

Mother is always at me to do my lessons,
by a 12-year-old (Norway).

When he gets home, he finds a note from his mother which he glances at before throwing it in the wastepaper basket—he knows what it says by heart: "I put your favourite ice-cream in the refrigerator. Be careful on your way to Jyuku. Love, Mother." While eating his snack, Noboru reads a comic book, watches television or plays a computer game. When he cannot find the solution to the game, he calls up his friend Fumio, who has the same software. The two boys are neighbours, but they would rather talk on the phone than see each other because they attend different prep schools at different times.

Before heading for school, Noboru spends two hard hours on his homework both for regular school and Jyuku. At about five o'clock, he drops in for a light meal at a fast-food restaurant where he meets up and chats with some classmates before they all go on to school. This is a rare moment when he can relax with friends.

During the three hours of prep school, he puts everything into his work, because whereas at regular school the children are of different levels, the pupils at Jyuku are all at the same level, which makes it easier for the teachers. In addition, the Jyuku teachers are specialists in the subjects they teach, so that the work there is more interesting, at least for the able pupils.

Noboru does not get home until nine in the evening; he then watches television while eating the meal his mother has prepared for him. But the day's work is not over yet. His mother is soon urging him to carry on studying until eleven.

This explains why foreigners visiting Japan might be surprised to see children carrying school-bags in the streets or in public transportation at night. How did this situation come about?

THE DEMANDS OF AN INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETY

For centuries, Japan was one of the most conservative societies in the world, with an apparently unchangeable value system and static socio-economic and political structures. After the Second World War, it unexpectedly became the model of modernity. Although pre-war Japan was a great Asian industrial power, in 1945 73 per cent of the population lived in rural areas. In the next twenty years, the ratio was reversed and today 80 per cent of the population is urban. Despite its lack of natural resources, Japan is today one of the world's most industrialized countries. It has to import most of its raw materials and manufacture highly value-added products for its survival. The availability of top-level skilled labour and advanced technology is vitally important for Japan.

One result of rapid urbanization was the break-up of the extended family. The average size of households dropped from 4.97 in 1955 to 3.1 in 1990 (2.3 in the Tokyo area), with 76 per cent of households today constituted by nuclear families. The post-war birth-rate plummeted from 2.7 million in 1947 and 1948 to 1.2 million in 1990.

This means that Japanese couples are having no more than one or two children. They love and cherish their offspring, want them to be successful in life, and, with the best will in the world, tend to overprotect and expect too much of them. They want to put their children on an escalator that will take them to the top by trying to get the best possible education for them, from kindergarten to university level. As a consequence, entrance exams into private schools have become highly competitive. Hence one comes across the tragicomic situation in which infants are sent to prep schools in order to help them to get into good kindergartens! From the age of two or three they have no free time to play.

DEVELOPING THE PERSONALITY THROUGH PLAY

I have been involved for nearly fifty years with child welfare in children's homes, hospitals, child-guidance centres and mental hospitals in Japan.

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We often use play therapy in the treatment of problem children because we know that through play children can express their feelings, their impulses, their dreams and their fantasies, and act out their hidden fears, anxieties, tensions and uncertainties. If children were given more opportunities to play freely, they would develop along healthier and more wholesome lines and would not need help from the social services.

Personality development begins at birth and play has a considerable role in it. From this standpoint, I must confess that the situation of Japanese children is very disturbing. They may seem happy, they are well fed and well dressed, get a good education and can play the most advanced electronic games. Look more closely, however, and you will see that they are deprived of time, space and true relationships with their peers.

My father is angry, **by Michiru Shioji, age 3 (Japan).**

We are coming across more and more problem children who are isolated, marginalized and alienated at school because they have never learned how to establish positive relationships with others. I remember a teenager, Asako, who could only answer yes or no when she first came to my child-guidance clinic. For the first few weeks I let her do whatever she wanted: read, watch television, listen to music or paint. Then one day she told me that she might be able to express her thoughts in writing. So we began exchanging letters. I suggested that she write about her happy memories of her mother and her early childhood, and she did this beautifully.

Asako had had a very harmonious relationship with her mother until she turned nine, when her mother sent her to a prep school in order to improve her chances of getting into a well-known girls' school where only one out of twenty applicants was accepted. From then on, Asako had no days off, no leisure time and no friends to play with. Every Sunday she had to go to another prep school to take a trial entrance exam for that particular girls' school. When she was accepted by the school, the family was delighted, but soon after that Asako found that she was incapable of making friends with children of her own age or of establishing rewarding relationships with others. She confined herself to her study and refused to speak to her parents, whom she held responsible for her maladjustment. Finally, she joined the growing ranks of Japanese children who play truant from school. According to Education Ministry figures, there are about 40,000 "non-attenders" among junior high school children in Japan, while about 123,000 drop out of high school altogether.

WHAT KIND OF FUTURE DO WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN?

Although the high-school drop-out rate is actually only 2.2 per cent, I believe it is about time we asked ourselves whether we want to provide the kind of education we once did, that will turn our children into physically, morally and socially developed human beings, or whether everything is to be sacrificed on the altar of achievement in an advanced technological society that tends to depersonalize all human relations.

Some glimmerings of a solution can be seen. Japan has more than 3,700 community halls where children can play and take part in creative activities with play-leaders. At Children's Castle, the national centre of these community halls, all kinds of experimental activity programmes take place for the wholesome physical and mental development of the young.

Many youth organizations offer excellent programmes where children and young people can meet and get to know each other. Each year about 170 child-guidance centres receive some 25,000 problem children, an increasing number of whom are suffering from emotional and psychosomatic disturbance stemming from pressure to achieve scholastic success and fear of failure. When asked what would make them happiest, most of them answer: "Good marks at school".

It is therefore urgent that our system of values should be reappraised in terms of our future society, the shape of which will depend on our children. It is they who will transform our dreams into reality. This is why, for our own good, we should carefully examine the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. When all is said and done, our future welfare depends on the happiness of our children. ■

The spoiled child

by Anne Rose

Are some children loved too much?

WHEN people talk of ill-loved children, they usually mean those who are loved too little or not at all, rarely those who are loved too much. It may be good news that, in some social classes at least, adults now take an active interest in their children, but even so the kind of relationship that is developing still deserves some attention. Observation of contemporary society suggests that in many cases children have become a new kind of god, sacred and untouchable beings so precious that they must be preserved at all costs from life's ups and downs.

To sit in a small chair, by Mike Batty, age 17 (Canada).

In this context, "taking the child into account" comes to mean making him or her the centre of the parents' lives. Many couples say, with the best will in the world, that their child means everything to them, when the situation should be the other way round: it is their job to serve as guides and mentors to the child.

Children—at least those who are wanted—often end up serving as alter egos for their parents. They fill a gap. They are the couple's greatest success. Who can say no to a little god? Nothing can be refused to a child that has been granted divine status. The parents will make sacrifices rather than see their child's whims frustrated. Some will change jobs, move house or even divorce, all supposedly for the good of their child. In return, of course, the infant is expected to repay in the course of time the great expectations invested in it.

Such a relationship, in which the parents are at the child's beck and call, can be parasitical, concealing the parents' own neuroses. The camouflage is all the better in that doting of this kind is encouraged both by social consensus and by commercial pressures.

You can see the childhood cult in operation in the heart of our cities, near schools or on buses, in public gardens or in restaurants. Its leitmotif never varies. It goes under the name of "protecting the child", but it might just as well be called stifling the child's initiative and encouraging laziness.

The parents' behaviour rests on two presumptions whose consequences are questionable at best. One is that human beings should suffer the least possible discomfort if they are to grow up harmoniously, "harmony" being defined as an absence of conflict rather than as a balance of complementary forces. The other is that a child's real needs correspond to its expressed wishes, at least in so far as these accord with the parents' own view of things. This of course presupposes that children have no sooner come into the world than they instinctively know what is good for them. This extraordinarily low view of human consciousness as a mere acting out of instinct makes a fitting pendant to the contrasting excesses of Victorian morality in the nineteenth century.

Though this strange new morality purports to be influenced by psychoanalysis, it in practice contradicts its findings that children need a mixture of success and failure in getting what they want. Occasionally frustrating children's wishes

Divorce,
by a 12-year-old (Norway).

can help them to develop by forcing them to confront limitations, thereby enabling them to handle similar setbacks better in future. The ability to overcome disappointments is one way in which youngsters can cultivate their own individuality. Yet it is almost impossible to encourage this dynamic process when the consensus is that the child must always get what it wants.

The adult's role should be to help children become adult. This is best done by teaching them to confront reality, not to escape from it. When well-meaning parents try to screen their children from the outside world, they prevent them from experiencing real life and so rob them of the chance to map its ways.

Although it is necessary to talk to children, the infinite patience some parents show in providing endless explanations and humouring even the most puerile utterances can actually harm their offspring. It takes away their ability to see reality in all its dimensions, leading them to believe that life will always treat them with kid gloves even when they are in the wrong.

Overprotectiveness can also deprive children of a knowledge of the feel of things, giving them instead a purely cerebral understanding of life. It is one thing to know that certain things sting, but quite another to have actually touched them and been stung. Children of their own accord search for barriers and limits, which teach them just how far they can go. If they do not find them, the dissatisfaction caused by their absence will ultimately provoke a reaction.

Because our children no longer learn to come to terms with the world, the sloughing off of childhood that accompanies adolescence often comes as an intolerable agony. The symptoms are typically a deep depression mingled with cynicism and nihilism. It is as though adolescents were exhibiting the hollowness of their own experience of life for all the world to see. Having never been touched by anything, they want to show that nothing can touch them.

Adolescents of this type see the least sign of opposition as violence against them. The raw vitality of life is altogether too much for them. Aware of an unfulfilled need, they thirst for a love that will give a structure to their lives rather than merely enveloping them, while also instinctively recoiling from any situation that might expose them to the shock of the real. Caught between aggression and melancholy, they no longer have the strength to meet life head-on.

So social workers, doctors, psychologists and psychoanalysts increasingly find themselves dealing with a new kind of despair. Only this time the young person's problems spring not from an unhappy childhood but from a spoilt one.

ANNE ROSE
is a French psychotherapist and anthropologist who is engaged on a study of the myth of woman and child in the West today. This article is inspired by an address given at a seminar held at UNESCO headquarters in January 1990.

The twelve who survive

by Robert G. Myers

Twelve out of thirteen new-born babies now reach age one. What future lies in store for them?

My family,
by Bilgundi T.M. Tarkewada, age 5 (India).

OVER the last three decades, extraordinary progress has been made in reducing infant and child mortality rates. Whereas five out of every six children born in 1960 survived to age one, twelve out of thirteen will reach their first birthday in 1991. By the year 2000 the figure could easily reach nineteen out of twenty. A great deal of money and emotional energy will rightly be spent during the coming decade in trying to save the one child who is at risk of death. But what will happen to the twelve out of thirteen who survive? Who is concerned about their early years? Who is looking beyond the mere fact of survival to ask the question "Survival for what?"

Unfortunately, in their earliest months and years most of these children will live in conditions that compromise their physical, mental, social and emotional development. Through neglect, millions of young survivors will be condemned to lethargic, unrewarding, unproductive and dependent lives.

And yet the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989 and ratified by 139 countries, says that "States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child" (article 6). It "recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development" (article 27). Furthermore, the Convention urges signatories to "render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities", and to "ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children" (article 18).

The Convention offers hope. It takes a comprehensive view of development. It emphasizes the role of parents (not just the mother), but also recognizes the need for support for parents through the creation of appropriate institutions. It makes an explicit link between work and child care. In brief, the rhetoric is good. But there is a need to translate rhetoric into action. Where do we stand in this process? Could we do better?

FLORINDA AND CARMEN

It is 7:00 AM and already the market in Huancayo, Peru, is bustling. Florinda Quispe has set out the baskets that she will try to sell. Tucked in amongst them is her daughter, Carmen, aged two. Now too big to be slung on the back, Carmen must spend the day on the ground near her mother, trying to keep out of trouble—no mean challenge. There is no child-care arrangement in the market. Other family members are busy at other tasks. The skimpy sales will not allow Florinda to pay for someone to watch her daughter; she barely has enough to make ends meet. So Carmen spends a great deal of the day sitting unhappily, or being scolded for her innocent play.

Carmen's mother is coping in the best way she knows how. But she needs support and that is not forthcoming. Florinda does not know about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. If she did, she might be sceptical about its meaning and intended effects. And yet that need not be. Elsewhere in Peru, even in these difficult times, there are promising initiatives providing child care for families in need. Some of these are associated with community kitchens in which families group together to cook meals in common, reducing costs, improving nutrition, and providing opportunities for other joint activities, such as child care.

Other programmes are linked to the formation of women's groups. In Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, programmes of home day care have been established, with local women who have been trained in child care taking neighbourhood

children into their homes during the day. This frees others to work and provides modest earnings for the day-care mother.

In a village in northeast Thailand, Tisana places her four-month-old son in a hammock where he will spend a great part of the day. The weight of the child brings the hammock together at the top, making an almost closed cradle. This practice leaves the baby with only the smallest view of the home's thatched roof through the narrow slit that remains open. Tisana knows that she is protecting her child, but she is not aware that she is depriving him of the stimulation he needs to develop mental alertness.

Nor is Tisana aware of a programme in another part of the Northeast in which home visitors have been trained to support families in their childrearing, encouraging those practices that are favourable to development and helping to change those that are unfavourable. A home visitor's simple suggestion of placing two sticks between the cloth sides at the top of the hammock has provided other Thai babies with additional visual stimulation and has helped to facilitate development. The programme, in which local mothers serve as home visitors, also includes a nutritional component and attention to feeding practices, both of which are helping to alleviate undernutrition. But its benefits have not yet reached Tisana and her baby.

***A happy childhood,* by Bianca Chiriloiu, age 11 (Romania).**

THE PRE-SCHOOL AT ABEOKUTA

At 10:00 AM, in an outlying area of Abeokuta, Nigeria, a group of three- to five-year-olds are barely visible to those who pass by on the main road. Partially hidden behind an oil drum, a cot, and an unusual collection of items for sale (machetes, brooms, mattresses, cloths), twenty children are squeezed on four small benches set close together under a corrugated metal roof. In the shadows in front of them, one child is pointing to letters chalked on a disintegrating blackboard. Just outside, a younger child, probably aged two, with a distended belly suggesting malnutrition, is idly dipping water out of a plastic pail and pouring it on the dusty ground. No adult is visible.

This "pre-school", with its makeshift locale outside a combination store and home, is typical of many such informal arrangements throughout the world whereby people are trying desperately to fill a void in the only way they know how. Child care has been left to private devices for the most part, but family members must work. Children do poorly in the first grades of schools, but no institutions in the government or outside seem concerned about their preparation, symbolized in the above example by memorizing ABCs. The young child with the distended belly, although unattended, is much better off than many children throughout the world who are left alone for long periods during the day, enclosed in small rooms, sometimes tied to posts or pieces of furniture while mother goes off to work.

From one perspective, the Abeokuta model provides a negative example of how to approach pre-schooling. From another, it provides an opportunity for governments and non-governmental organizations interested in the improvement of early childhood development, indicating a need and a willingness on the part of families and communities to seek local solutions.

LOOKING FURTHER

Intentionally, none of the above examples has been taken from extreme conditions in which young children are, for instance, suffering from third-degree malnutrition in a famine such as that which struck Ethiopia. Children in such special

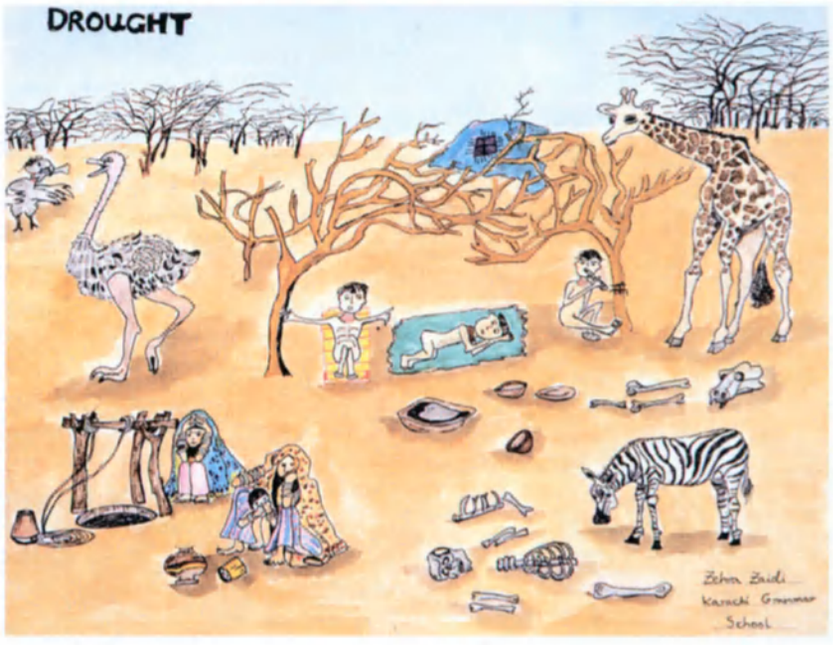
circumstances require special treatment. Their physical plight is more obvious and more likely to be attended to. However, such emergency treatment has tended to be short-sighted. Little thought is given to what will happen to the children if they manage to survive. In many cases no attention is paid to the social and psychological stress and/or lack of nurturing and stimulation that can permanently affect development. In these more extreme cases, an extra effort is required to look beyond the tragedy of the moment to longer-term, more integrated and humane treatment.

Since the International Year of the Child (IYC) in 1979, considerable progress has been made towards improving the lot of young children at risk. Without doubt, the IYC generated a new interest in this question. Many descriptive and analytical exercises were undertaken at the national level, intended to identify needs, to create awareness and to mobilize people around the idea of attention to "the whole child". Many small-scale pilot or demonstration projects were begun that marked a significant opening towards nonformal programmes set within a context of community development. Parental education programmes were also begun, as were others directed towards the care of younger children by older brothers and sisters. At the same time, considerable energy was devoted to promoting and expanding formal pre-schools. These efforts have provided many cost-effective models that can be drawn upon.

But the enthusiasm and the activities generated by the International Year of the Child have often withered for want of continued support. Governments and international organizations have been timid and tepid in their approaches to early childhood. The economic recession of the 1980s reinforced sceptical tendencies in these organizations about the value of such programmes. The emphasis on survival, narrowly and medically defined, also distracted attention from a broader and more integrated view focusing on human development.

As a result, we can point to progress, but in most countries:

- coverage for identifiable, organized programmes is still relatively low. This is particularly true for sub-Saharan Africa.
- Many projects and programmes continue to be pilot or demonstration activities that are innovative, effective and capable of being replicated, but have not been extended in a significant way.
- The distribution of programmes, particularly the more institutionalized ones, while improving, often continues to favour the cities and to miss children who are "at risk". (There are, of course, exceptions.)
- Reaching children before the age of three, and particularly between the ages of one and three, continues to be a challenge. Day care that takes into account both the needs of children and their working mothers remains at a very low level, both in extension and in quality.
- Programmes of support and education for parents have grown dramatically in some countries but are virtually nonexistent in others, particularly with respect to the psychosocial components of early development. And there is a tendency in these programmes to impose, rather than to reconstruct and expand knowledge.
- Often the quality of the programmes is poor, so that the effects on children are minimal. The combining of elements of integrated attention to the child remains a challenge, despite some successes and an increasing awareness of the problems.



***Drought*, by Zehra Zaidi, age 9 (Pakistan).**

THE ALL-IMPORTANT EARLY YEARS

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides us with an opportunity to pay greater attention to the early years in programmes addressed directly to children, in programmes of parental education and support, and in community development projects that have effects on the child.

The arguments in favour of social investment are compelling. The need and demand are widespread and growing. Although some progress has been made, we are at a very early stage and much remains to be done, not only for children in exceptional circumstances but for those who endure the "normal" day-to-day effects of grinding poverty. We have examples to draw upon. The cost need not be high. There is little reason why we cannot do a better job than we are doing to improve early childhood development.

Let us hope that the Convention will help give the signatory nations, and perhaps others, additional force to dedicate the resources and energy needed for the sound development of the twelve who survive. It is they who will be the leaders and builders and creators of our world in the twenty-first century. ■

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Child labour in the world today

CHILD labour in today's world is overwhelmingly concentrated in three economic sectors—agriculture, the so-called "urban informal" sector, and domestic service. In each of these sectors children are badly exploited, and none of the three has been effectively penetrated by mechanisms for containing child labour and the abuses associated with it.

■ The agricultural trap

Today as in the past most of the world's working children are employed in agriculture. It is tempting to imagine them working at traditional tasks under the benevolent eye of parents who want to provide them with the skills they will need in adult life. Their environment is often assumed to be physically and psychologically healthier than that of city children. This bucolic vision reflects the romantic notions of city-dwellers who have little direct experience of rural poverty and does not correspond to the facts.

All over the world, the industrialization of agriculture is changing the structure of production, and with it the way rural families earn their living. More and more country dwellers are working for other people, because they have either no land of their own or not enough to support themselves.

Agricultural work is often organized in such a way that children work as long and hard as their parents in order to ensure family survival. In some places adults are only employed on condition that their children help as well. This is one

***Difficulty*, by Jeeranat Madee, age 13 (Thailand).**

reason why rural working children are especially likely to be unschooled and illiterate. The protection their families can provide is strictly limited.

With the modernization of agricultural technology, even children working on family farms are now exposed to dangerous machinery and chemicals unknown only a few years ago. Controls on hazardous insecticides and herbicides are generally weak, and as a rule neither children nor their families are taught how to handle safely even the most widely-used machinery and products. In many countries there is growing concern about the accident rate among child agricultural workers.

It is worth noting that rates of child mortality, illness, malnutrition, disability and illiteracy are almost everywhere substantially higher in rural than in urban areas. Many of the exploited children found in the cities have fled there from the countryside or been sent there because the situation was desperate at home.

In the coming years rural children will come under greater pressure because of the rapid restructuring of world agriculture. Many will end up vulnerable to exploitation, whether in impoverished rural communities or in the overburdened cities to which they migrate. The pawns of social forces that they cannot control and do not understand, these children have few options. They constitute a young and vulnerable workforce for the two other problem areas.

■ The informal sector

The term "informal sector" is generally used to designate relatively small unregistered enterprises which typically are exempted from, or not covered by, regulations governing larger businesses. Although it exists everywhere, the informal sector is particularly large and vigorous in urban areas. Its vitality has only recently been recognized, and in many countries today it is expanding rapidly, sometimes with government encouragement. In some industrialized countries and in most developing nations the informal sector is a major engine of growth and accounts for as much as a third or more of all economic activity.

Fed by migration from the countryside and the increasing decentralization of production, it is already the fastest-growing area of child labour employment. By the beginning of the next century it could well overtake agriculture as the principal area of child labour. In most cities it already encompasses the vast majority of children who work outside the home to earn a little money or their keep.

Children often participate in the informal sector as employees of enterprises such as brickmaking, construction, handicrafts and food services. Some of these occupations are among the most dangerous in which children are engaged, and many of the cruellest child labour abuses that have been documented are in this sector.

Children working in brickyards carry heavy loads that can leave them weakened, injured or deformed. In carpet-weaving workshops they can ruin their eyesight and damage their limbs and backs. Young pencil-makers, who manufacture pencils other children use at school, breathe in hazardous slate dust that can condemn them to early disability and death from lung disease. Many similar examples could be cited, all of which have long been recognized and condemned.

These situations still persist, for one thing because many countries exempt small and family-run businesses from the provisions of their child-labour laws, despite the fact that most employed children work in businesses of this kind. Another problem is that labour enforcement systems are overstretched and can barely even meet their commitments in the formal sector.

Some city children work on their own account. Most of them practice street trades such as hawking, shining shoes, washing cars, even prostitution. Numerous countries and cities have laws prohibiting their activities, but they have proved difficult to enforce, and their wisdom is in any case doubtful. Labour inspection is an impractical approach to this sort of work, and other means are required to protect these children from the violence, exploitation and abuse they frequently encounter.

■ Domestic servitude

Youngsters working as domestic servants may be the most exploited of all, and the most difficult to protect, particularly if they live in the homes of their employers. Their numbers are thought to be huge, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but it has proved virtually impossible to count them. The vast majority are girls, frequently pre-adolescents, who live with and are utterly dependent on their employers. Investigators believe that the number of children in domestic service is growing in some regions, in response to increasingly desperate poverty and the unwillingness of adult women to do this work in such bad conditions.

Sometimes children are placed by impoverished parents with relatives or acquaintances on the understanding that the latter will support and educate the child in return for its labour. In other cases the child is hired out for wages, typically paid largely or even entirely to the parents. Some parents simply sell their children into bondage for cash.

When such a sale is to an agent rather than directly to the final employer, parents and child may lose contact permanently. Some children are unwittingly sold in this way into forced prostitution.

It is possible that many child domestic workers are reasonably well treated by their employers. Even so, they are utterly at the latters' mercy, and therefore highly vulnerable to abuse. Typically they are expected to work long hours, often with no regular days off. Even though most work in relatively well-to-do homes, many are malnourished. They are not allowed to eat the family food even when they cook it, and are provided with neither room nor bed, commonly sleeping on the kitchen floor.

Sexual abuse by members of the household is said to be common, and various investigators also suspect a high incidence of physical abuse. It is doubtful whether many of these children of school age are permitted to attend educational institutions on a regular basis.

Domestic servants are vulnerable in many ways. They are open to abuse because of their age, their sex, their confinement, their invisibility to the outside world, their total dependence on their employers, and often their lack of familiarity with the world beyond the doorstep. ■

Source: *Still so far to go: Child labour in the world today*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva, 1989.

The family, by Karin Hogset, age 14 (Norway).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been described as a Magna Carta for children. It has fifty-four articles detailing the individual rights of any person under eighteen years of age to develop his or her full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect, exploitation or other abuses.

The outcome of ten years of negotiations, the Convention was adopted by the United Nations on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990 after being ratified by twenty States. So far 139 countries have either signed the Convention or have become States Parties to it by ratification or accession*. When ratified by a State, the Convention becomes binding law in it. A Committee of ten experts will monitor compliance in the States Parties to the Convention.

The Convention goes beyond previously existing instruments by seeking to balance the rights of the child with the rights and duties of parents or others who have responsibilities for child survival, development and protection, and by giving the child the right to participate in decisions affecting both the present and the future.

Among the pressing issues addressed, some of which appear for the first time in an international convention, are obligations to children in particularly difficult circumstances, such as the needs of refugee children (article 22), protection from sexual and other forms of child exploitation (articles 34 and 36), drug abuse (article 33), children in trouble with the law (article 40), inter-country adoptions (article 35), children in armed conflicts (articles 38 and 39), the needs of disabled children (article 23), and the children of minority and indigenous groups (article 30).

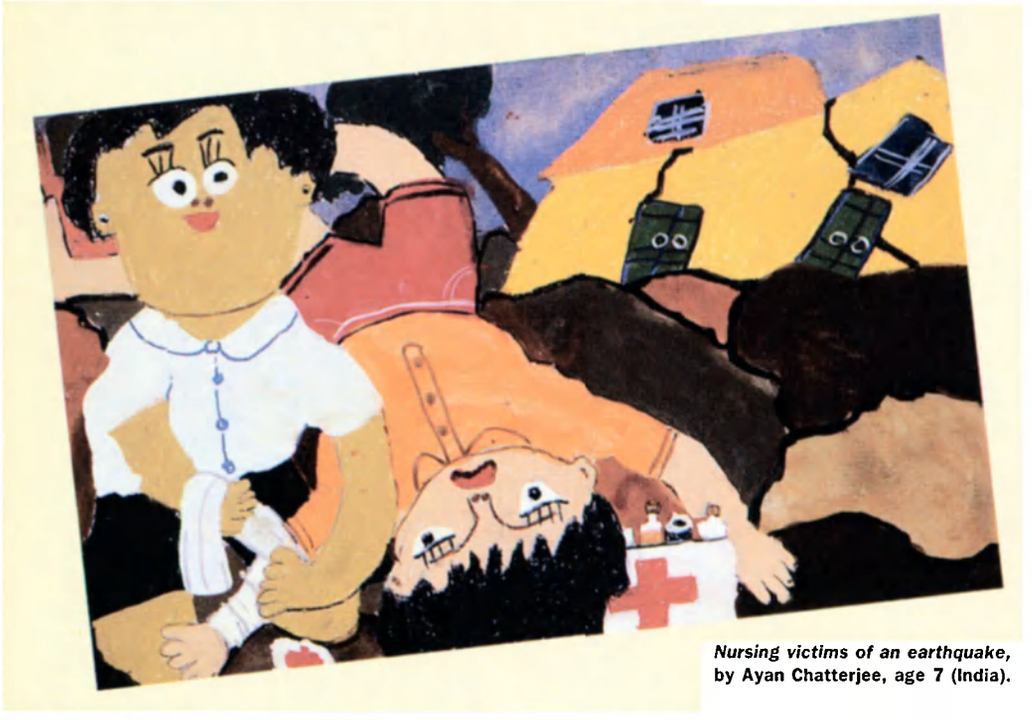
Education is the subject of two major articles (27 and 28), which were reinforced by the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien (Thailand) from 5 to 9 March 1990. Primary education is to be compulsory, free to all, and should be directed to the development of a child's personality, talents and natural abilities, with due respect for cultural identity, language and values. Stress is placed on equality of educational opportunity for girls and boys.

The inherent strength of the new Convention lies in its flexibility, its capacity to accommodate the many different approaches of nations in pursuit of a common goal. It has not evaded sensitive issues, but has found means to adjust to the different cultural, religious and other values which address universal child needs in their own ways.

Below is a summary of the main provisions of the Convention.

* As of 25 July 1991.

THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION



Nursing victims of an earthquake, by Ayan Chatterjee, age 7 (India).

Preamble
The preamble recalls the basic principles of the United Nations and specific provisions of certain relevant treaties and proclamations. It reaffirms the fact that children, because of their vulnerability, need special care and protection, and places special emphasis on the primary caring and protective responsibility of the family.

It also reaffirms the need for legal and other protection of the child before and after birth, the importance of respect for the cultural values of the child's community, and the vital role of international co-operation in securing children's rights.

Definition of a child (art. 1)
A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.

Non-discrimination (art. 2)
All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Best interests of the child (art. 3)
All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

Implementation of rights (art. 4)
The State must do all it can to implement the rights contained in the Convention.

Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities (art. 5)
The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for the child which is appropriate to her or his evolving capacities.

Survival and development (art. 6)
Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Name and nationality (art. 7)
The child has the right to a name at birth. The child has also the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, to know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

Preservation of identity (art. 8)
The State has an obligation to protect, and if necessary re-establish, basic aspects of the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.

Separation from parents (art. 9)
The child has a right to live with his or her parents unless this is deemed incompatible with the child's best interests. The child also has the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.

Family reunification (art. 10)
Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion or the maintenance of the child-parent relationship.

Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)
The State has an obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

The child's opinion (art. 12)
The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

Freedom of expression (art. 13)
The child has the right to express his or her views, obtain information, make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)
The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.

Freedom of association (art. 15)
Children have a right to meet with others, and to join or form associations.

Protection of privacy (art. 16)
Children have the right to protection from interference with their privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

Access to appropriate information (art. 17)
The State shall ensure that information and material from a diversity of sources is accessible to children, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information which is of social and cultural benefit to the child, and take steps to protect him or her from harmful materials.

Parental responsibilities (art. 18)
Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide appropriate assistance to parents in child-raising.

Protection from abuse and neglect (art. 19)
The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programmes for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Protection of a child without family (art. 20)
The State is obliged to provide special protection for a child deprived of the family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is available in such cases. Efforts to meet this obligation shall pay due regard to the child's cultural background.

Adoption (art. 21)
In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, and then only with the authorization of competent authorities, and with safeguards for the child.

Refugee children (art. 22)
Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to co-operate with competent organizations which provide such protection and assistance.

Disabled children (art. 23)
A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.

Me going to school, by Mailin Bedoya Rivero, age 9 (Cuba).

Health and health services (art. 24)
The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality. They shall encourage international co-operation in this regard and strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health services.

Periodic review of placement (art. 25)
A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

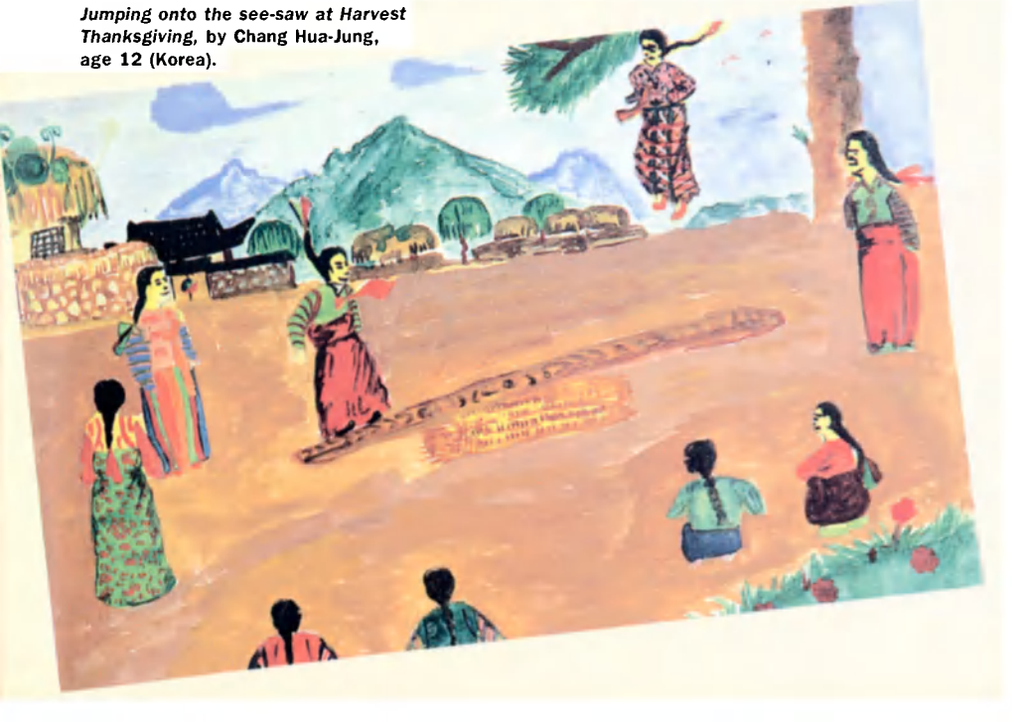
Social security (art. 26)
The child has the right to benefit from social security including social insurance.

Standard of living (art. 27)
Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that this responsibility can be fulfilled, and is. State responsibility can include material assistance to parents and their children.

Education (art. 28)
The child has a right to education, and the State's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity. School discipline shall be consistent with the child's rights and dignity. The State shall engage in international co-operation to implement this right.

Aims of education (art. 29)
Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.

Jumping onto the see-saw at Harvest Thanksgiving, by Chang Hua-Jung, age 12 (Korea).



Children of minorities or indigenous populations (art. 30)
Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practise their own religion and language.

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)
The child has the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Child labour (art. 32)
The child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.

Drug abuse (art. 33)
Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.

Sexual exploitation (art. 34)
The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Sale, trafficking and abduction (art. 35)
It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

Other forms of exploitation (art. 36)
The child has the right to protection from all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

Torture and deprivation of liberty (art. 37)
No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility of release are prohibited for offences committed by persons below 18 years. Any child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interests not to do so. A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with the family.

Armed conflicts (art. 38)
States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 15 years of age play no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. States shall also ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict as described in relevant international law.

Rehabilitative care (art. 39)
The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflicts, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

Administration of juvenile justice (art. 40)
A child in conflict with the law has the right to treatment which promotes the child's sense of dignity and worth, takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her reintegration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defence. Judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be avoided wherever possible.

Respect for higher standards (art. 41)
Wherever standards set in applicable national and international law relevant to the rights of the child are higher than those in this Convention, the higher standards shall always apply.

Implementation and entry into force (arts. 42 to 54)
The provisions of articles 42-54 notably foresee:

1) the State's obligation to make the rights contained in this Convention widely known to both adults and children.

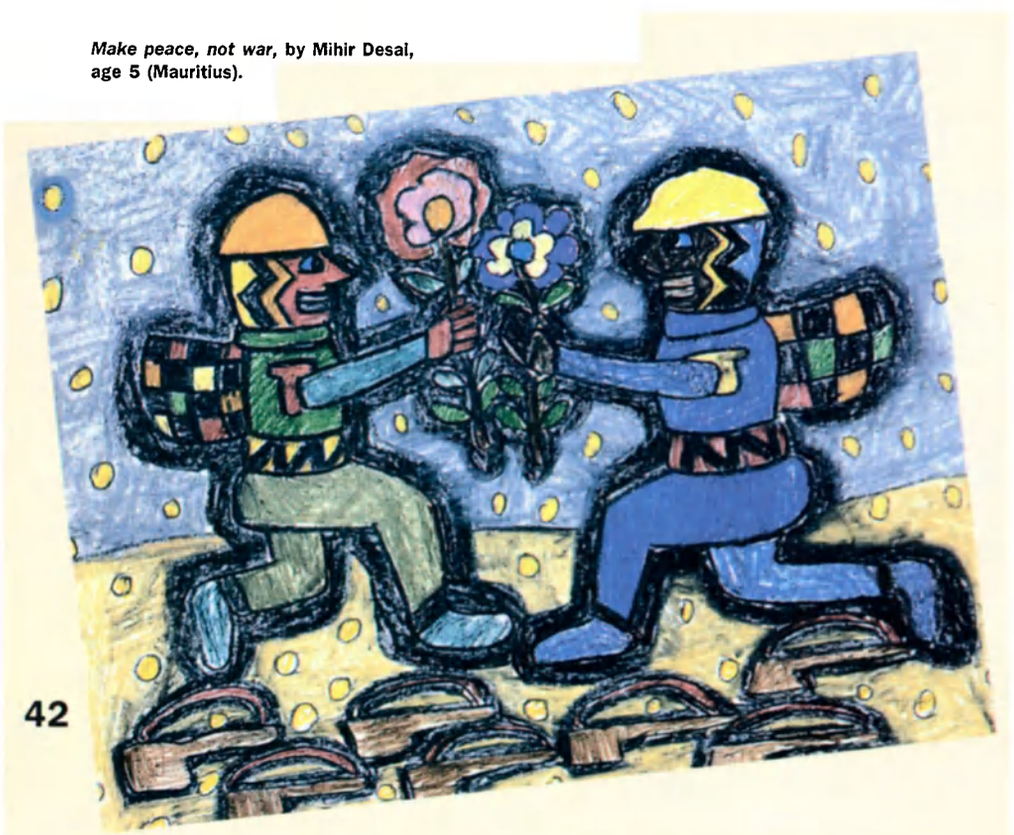
2) the setting up of a Committee on the Rights of the child composed of ten experts, which will consider reports that States Parties to the Convention are to submit two years after ratification and every five years thereafter. The Convention enters into force—and the Committee would therefore be set up—once 20 countries have ratified it.

3) States Parties are to make their reports widely available to the general public.

4) The Committee may propose that special studies be undertaken on specific issues relating to the rights of the child, and may make its evaluations known to each State Party concerned as well as to the UN General Assembly.

5) In order to "foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international co-operation", the specialized agencies of the UN (such as the ILO, WHO, and UNESCO) and UNICEF will be able to attend the meetings of the Committee. Together with any other body recognized as "competent", including NGOs in consultative status with the UN and UN organs such as the UNHCR, they can submit pertinent information to the Committee and be asked to advise on the optimal implementation of the Convention. ■

***Make peace, not war*, by Mihir Desai, age 5 (Mauritius).**



Source: United Nations Centre for Human Rights and UNICEF

A mirror for childhood

by François Vallet

In the cinema, children seek an image of their own condition

Above, a scene from *300 mil do nieba*, a film by the Polish director Maciej Dejczer.

Most films about the young portray childhood as a perpetual act of defiance directed at the indifference and contempt of the adult world. On screen, two camps—children and grown-ups—confront one another, though with occasional attempts at reconciliation and understanding. The youngsters must struggle constantly to have their rights and status recognized.

To understand why, one must go back to events that predate the invention of cinema. According to the French historian Philippe Ariès, "A considerable change in manners took place from the end of the seventeenth century".[1] Previously children had lived in the heart of the community. They learned from teachers or from tradesmen or master craftsmen to whom they were apprenticed, sharing their work and worries but also the world of the imagination, festivals and games.

Compare this fluid world of free exchange and shared identity with the current situation, in which children are pigeon-holed into school and the family unit. Our century has seen

adults lose childhood from their lives, and with it has gone a part of their souls—maybe the most important one.

Because of the wall that now separates childhood from the adult world, children have become mysterious to their elders, incomprehensible, almost alien creatures. The result is that young people have turned to cinema to find their own self-image. Adults who wish to help them must first break down the walls separating the two communities.

Lonely and misunderstood

Usually it is within the family unit—what we now call the "nuclear family"—that children's alienation becomes most disturbingly apparent. Their isolation is dramatically reflected in such works as François Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (France, 1959) and Robert Benton's *Kramer versus Kramer* (U.S.A., 1979), which depict the effects of a broken marriage. The children in these films are truly "misunderstood", to borrow the title of Luigi Comencini's masterpiece *Incompreso* (Italy, 1966).

Another class of film depicts children struggling against the established order at school or in other institutions that prove incapable of meeting their emotional demands. These children are often shown trapped in a kind of limbo, cut off from an adult world that they cannot share and with which they are not even able to identify.

Feeling unloved, they are tempted to make a getaway which brings them a brief taste of freedom. Sometimes they run away to find a father figure. A similar quest provides the plot of Jacques Doillon's *Le Petit Criminel* (France, 1990), though in that case the search is for an elder sister whom the main character has never seen. Whatever their object, these childhood odysseys can be alarming, as the two young Polish protagonists of Marcel Dejczer's *300 mil do nieba* (Poland, 1990) find out to their cost.

Children of institutions and the nuclear family, all these rebels reject the persona imposed on them by the adult world via changes in social customs. Because the condition of childhood as we now know it is a product of the family—a purely adult invention—children in response feel the need to invent themselves, to create their own image. In this respect, cinema becomes not so much a mirror of childhood as the search for a mirror, in which the child's true quest is to discover him- or herself.

Four scenes from recent films about children.
Above: *Pixote*, directed by Hector Babenco.
Below, left: *Halfaouine, l'enfant des terrasses*, directed by Ferid Boughedir.
Above, right: *Salaam Bombay*, directed by Mira Nair.
Below, right: *Incompreso*, directed by Luigi Comencini.

Street children

Early on, cinema found a spokesman—perhaps "role-model" would be a better word, for there is not much speaking in most scenes where the young confront the adult world—for all children in the shape of the little vagabond, Charlie Chaplin's companion in *The Kid* (U.S.A., 1921) and the hero of dozens of later films. Whatever their setting, films seem to get closest to childhood when they portray it straightforwardly, without any elaboration. The child is the simplest and most authentic of human beings.

From *The Kid* to Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Story* (U.S.A., 1990)—a silent film made in black and white that treats the same theme of abandoned children helped by a down-and-out—a horde of homeless children have paraded across the screen. The successors of yesterday's little vagabonds now roam the alleys of Third World megalopolises like Bombay, Bahia or Sao Paulo in such films as Ciro Duran's *Los Gamines* (Colombia, 1978), Hector Babenco's *Pixote* (Brazil, 1980), and Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* (India, 1988).

These films could hardly be further from the cheery Hollywood comedies of the years from 1930 to 1950, in which tiny troupers, their heads haloed with curls, filled the screen with their carefree capers. This was the time when Shirley Temple, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney were turning out film after film. Only a few exceptional productions dating from this period still captivate audiences today, notably Victor Fleming's unforgettable *Wizard of Oz* (U.S.A., 1948), Charles Laughton's *Night of the Hunter* (U.S.A., 1955) and Fritz Lang's *Moonfleet* (U.S.A., 1955).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the cinema reacted against the angelic image of a protected childhood and instead made children the focal point of a number of horror movies. Such films established the point that the simplistic schema by which childhood equalled good and the adult world evil was outdated. Once the images of innocence, children now became witches and warlocks, creatures possessed by Satan or the Antichrist or, in Wolf Rilla's *Village of the Damned* (United Kingdom, 1960), dangerous mutants.

The Hollywood ideal of childhood was just as far away when the young were depicted in the heat of battle in Viet Nam, the Second World War or elsewhere. The paradise-garden of childhood was spattered with blood in such works as René Clément's *Jeux Interdits* (France, 1951) and Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun* (U.S.A., 1987).

Nor have films shrunk from confronting children with the facts of life. Frerid Boughedir's *Halfaouine, l'enfant des terrasses* (Tunisia, 1990) treats the subject of sexuality with tact and discretion. The shadow of death and its effect on the film's young protagonists is the theme of *La fracture du myocarde* by Jacques Fansten (France, 1991). Children also serve as witnesses counting the costs of racial prejudice and segregation in such films as Louis Malle's *Au revoir, les enfants* (France, 1987), *The Kitchen Toto* by Harry Hook (U.S.A./U.K., 1988) and Andrzej Wajda's *Korczak* (Poland, 1991).

The anti-hero of the late 20th century

In most of the films mentioned above, the child, in Truffaut's words, "invents life, knocks up against it, but at the same time develops powers of resistance." But children can also, by a subtle role-reversal, watch over adults, acting as their guide and protector. The child thereby becomes father to the man, as Pinocchio does when he pulls Geppetto from the belly of the whale in Comencini's *Adventures of Pinocchio (Italy, 1972)*, or in *Cuore* (Italy, 1984) when Rabucco takes his illiterate father to school.

Throughout its history, the cinema has shown us, in the most truthful way, childhood as a state of exposure. Confronting real dangers, accepting challenges and fighting injustice, the child is the anti-hero of the closing years of the century. There is nothing of Rambo or Mad Max here. Children's strength and resources lie in demonstrating the sensitivity and intelligence of which they are capable. The main reward, as ever, is a place in the adult world.

For children have one formidable weapon: their sense of humour, or to be more precise, the unspoiled impertinence that is their most characteristic quality. Long may the cinema portray it. For even when so many films set out to destroy the last illusions concerning childhood, even though it may irritate over-serious adults, the impertinence of childhood remains our best guarantee of a different future. ■

1. *L'enfant et la vie de famille sous l'Ancien Régime*, Seuil, Paris, 1973.

FRANÇOIS VALLET
is a French novelist whose work focuses on the condition of children and young people today. He is the author of an essay on the image of the child in the cinema (Cerf publishers, Paris, 1991).

Sana'a, the pearl of Arabia

by Lotfallah Soliman

In the 1950s, word went round that a rich American had offered to buy the city of Sana'a, minus its inhabitants, from the Imam Ahmed for $40 million, an enormous sum at that time. The plan provided for Sana'a's population to be rehoused in a new city which was to be specially built for them in the vicinity.

When this anecdote is told today, the people of Sana'a smile with a certain complacency. Sana'a is now the capital of all Yemen, and the renovation of its old city, which is inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, is well under way.

Fact and fiction

Located at an altitude of 2,200 metres, too high for mosquitoes to survive, Sana'a is worth seeing for its site alone. It is not a city that wears its heart on its sleeve. Like that of fairy tales, its magic only works on those who have not lost a capacity for wonder. It does not reveal its charm to the visitor who summarily orders it to "Open Sesame". The Italian poet and film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini was right to use Sana'a as the setting for his film *The Thousand and One Nights.*

Until they began to retreat into themselves under the Zaydi imams, Sana'a and the Yemen were places of meetings, confrontations and ancient loyalties.

Sana'a is a meeting place of fact and fantasy. Consider some of the stories told about it. That it was founded by Shem, the son of Noah. A legend. That the kingdom of Saba, over which it ruled, was one of the richest and most ancient civilizations of Antiquity. Fact. That a great queen ruled over it, the "Queen

LOTFALLAH SOLIMAN,
Egyptian journalist and writer, is the author of *Pour une histoire profane de la Palestine* (La découverte publishers, Paris, 1989).

of Sheba" whose existence is recorded only in sacred literature, not in any secular text or archaeological inscription. Probably a legend. That the largest Christian edifice south of the Mediterranean was built at Sana'a. Fact—although the story that it was built to commemorate a visit by Jesus of Nazareth is fictional. That the city's Great Mosque was built during the Prophet's lifetime. Partly fact, partly fiction. That its library is only rivalled by those of Cairo and Kairouan. Fact. Doubtless more archaeological research will be necessary to help us distinguish the authentic from the spurious, truth from legend.

More literally, Sana'a was a meeting place of caravans bearing gold and silver from the Orient. The kingdoms of Saba (950-115 B.C.) and Himyar (until c. 525) became wealthy through the myrrh and frankincense coveted by Ptolemaic Egypt, and later through moka (the original name for coffee), the trade in which would be disputed for many years by the Portuguese, the Ottoman Turks and the British.

It was also a meeting place between polytheism and monotheism, a scene of confrontation between Judaism and Christianity, until Islam cut the quarrel short. The Yemen and its capital Sana'a gave themselves totally to the new faith. They provided Islam with soldiers and technicians who left traces as far away as Andalusia, where even today strongholds and palaces have Yemeni names.

Finally it was a place where old and new met, sometimes in confrontation. Until the revolution which brought the imamate to an end in 1962, the outward appearance of the Yemen remained unchanged for centuries.

An outstanding architectural heritage

For over a thousand years mosques, palaces, madrasahs (Qur'anic schools), caravanserais, *hammams* (public baths) and multi-storey houses were built at Sana'a in an unvarying style. In the 183 hectares of the old walled city, these buildings of from four to seven storeys, their façades adorned with whitewashed friezes and beautiful carved windows, formed a strange and extraordinary architectural ensemble. Each storey had its own specific material, decoration, use, plan, alabaster plasterwork or stained glass windows. Each house had its own well and sanitary facilities—liquid wastes were recycled to water gardens and solid matter was dried and burned to heat water in the *hammams*. The winding streets were narrow, but they were quite adequate when the traffic was limited to people and animals.

In 1962 the fall of the monarchy which had preserved the medieval tranquility of Sana'a profoundly disturbed the traditional structure of society. Within a few years, the city's population had risen from 55,000 to 420,000. Around the old city a new one was built with modern facilities such as running water, electricity, the telephone, schools, universities, clinics, hospitals, restaurants, cinemas and public buildings. The young, soon followed by their elders, deserted their traditional family houses and went to live in more comfortable quarters in the new town.

The old city of Sana'a, once famed as "the pearl of Arabia", went inexorably into decline. Its population fell from 55,000 to 35,000, and its composition changed. Both those who remained and the newcomers who moved in lacked the means to maintain the old dwellings, which deteriorated and fell into ruin. Since the inhabitants of the Old City also wished to enjoy the benefits of modern household amenities, electric wires and cables were strung above the roofs of the houses, which began to bristle with television aerials. Cheap plastic piping laid under the roads to bring running water burst beneath the weight of uncontrolled traffic. Waste water infiltrated into the ground, making the buildings even more fragile.

Saving the old city

At the end of the civil war in 1972, the Yemeni government passed a law to protect its architectural and archaeological heritage, with particular reference to the old city of Sana'a. But the government's resources were very limited. UNESCO also wished to help to preserve what could still be saved of Sana'a, and in 1980 its General Conference adopted

Left: A general view of the old city of Sana'a, looking towards the west.
Right: A plasterer restores a building in Sana'a.

a resolution authorizing the Director-General to collaborate with the Yemeni government in drawing up a plan of action for the preservation and restoration of the old city. In 1981 and 1982, architects, historians, sociologists and engineers were mobilized to study the problems posed by the safeguard of a site which, it was felt, should not be mummified but given new life in accordance with its old traditions.

By 1983 the plan had been approved by the Yemeni government and UNESCO, and its implementation began. In December 1984, before the city's inclusion on the World Heritage List (which did not take place until 1987), the restoration and safeguard of Sana'a were placed by presidential decree under the authority of a High Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The Director-General of UNESCO launched an appeal to the international community to help the Yemeni government carry out a rescue operation with an estimated cost of $300 million.

Several countries responded to UNESCO's appeal. Italy played an active part in pluridisciplinary studies connected with the rescue operation and became the first country to take part in the rehabilitation of an entire district of the old city. Its example was followed by the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, France, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Japan, and by the United Nations Development Programme, whose contribution notably sought to revive traditions of craftsmanship.

In June 1988, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, visited Sana'a to get a first-hand impression of the extent and complexity of the task. It will take fifteen years of constant effort and much devotion to save Sana'a. ■

Above: A craftsman at work on a stained-glass window.
Below: Houses in the old city.

■ ■ ■

A day for the African child

As a mark of their concern for their youngest and most vulnerable citizens, the leaders of the 51 Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have declared 16 June the "Day of the African Child". The OAU wants to ensure that war, economic recession, drought and the AIDS tragedy do not deprive African children of the possibility of a hopeful future. The date was chosen in memory of the children massacred at Soweto in June 1976.

■ ■ ■

Kites for peace

On 13 October 1991, thousands of kites will rise into the sky above Moscow, Beijing, Sydney, Berlin, Paris, Bombay and other cities to proclaim the need for a world free of conflict. The 6th One Sky, One World Kite Festival for World Peace and Friendship will bring a message of peace and international goodwill to every continent. Started in Colorado (U.S.A.) in 1986, the festival has become an annual event that last year attracted more than 200,000 spectators and participants in 23 countries.

■ ■ ■

A small world of music

From 21 to 29 August, the 8th annual *Orchestrades Européennes* welcomed 30 musical groups from 15 countries to the French town of Brives. Nine hundred music students came together to practice their skills and extend their experience in workshops, rehearsals, open-air performances and concerts. This year as previously, the highlight was the performance of a new work specially commissioned for the festival and given its première in a spectacular final concert conducted by its composer, Gérard Calvi.

■ ■ ■

Fair copies

The Vatican Library has given UNESCO a facsimile of the manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy,* illustrated by Botticelli between 1490 and 1497. To mark the occasion, UNESCO's own library staged an exhibition entitled "Great Facsimiles from the Vatican", featuring reproductions of some of the Vatican's rarest and most beautiful works. The facsimiles were produced in the 1980s to enable the public to discover masterpieces that were inaccessible because of their fragility.

■ ■ ■

Conserving biological diversity

At the invitation of the United Nations, representatives of more than 100 countries met in Madrid in June to discuss the terms of an international convention for the protection of biological diversity. The Convention, which has been in preparation since 1988, may be signed at the International Conference on Environment and Development which will be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. According to the experts who met in Madrid, 40,000 species are disappearing annually around the world, disturbing the balance of nature. It is often pointed out that the extinction of a single insect or micro-organism could lead to the destruction of a crop that would have been beneficial to humankind.

■ ■ ■

Intelligent cars

No, it's not science fiction—in the U.S.A. some cars are already equipped with radar equipment that provides them with intelligence of a sort. The device warns the driver when other vehicles approach dangerously close. The next step will be to add electronically-operated brakes that will automatically slow the car down and reduce the risk of an accident.

■ ■ ■

A survival from the Stone Age

Prehistoric paintings have been found in a cave in the Alava region of Spain. The news was kept secret until a few months ago, to allow experts to check the authenticity of the works. In all there are 75 rock paintings, including images of animals, handprints and other, probably symbolic designs. The specialists describe the find as a Stone Age sanctuary, about 13,000 years old.

■ ■ ■

The ocean thermostat

A study undertaken in the U.S.A. over the past few years by California State University and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography suggests that the Earth may have a natural thermostat that prevents the surface temperature of the oceans from exceeding 31°C at any point. When the temperature rises to 27°C, intense evaporation causes the formation of clouds which act as a kind of mirror, reflecting the Sun's rays and thus reducing the amount of heat reaching the surface of the planet.

To what extent may this automatic regulatory system protect us from global warming produced by the greenhouse effect? Unfortunately, the interplay of the forces which maintain global equilibrium is so complex and delicate that it is by no means certain that the mechanism will always work as well as the theory suggests.

■ ■ ■

Child health targets for the next decade

In the Middle East and North Africa, the target of 80 per cent immunization coverage of the child population, fixed by UNICEF for 1990, has been achieved. The figure for sub-Saharan Africa has risen from 58 to 75 per cent, despite civil wars in the region. Objectives for the year 2000 set by the first World Summit Conference for Children, held at UN headquarters in New York on 29 and 30 September 1990, now seem attainable. They include the global eradication of poliomyelitis, the elimination of neonatal tetanus (by 1995), a 90 per cent reduction in measles cases and the maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage (at least 90% of children under one year of age).

■ ■ ■

The protection of copyright

The 1st Ibero-American Congress on Intellectual Property will take place in Madrid from 28 to 31 October, under the sponsorship of the Spanish Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Spanish and Latin-American specialists will debate such subjects as the protection of computer software, authors' control over the uses to which their works are put, and the role of the State in protecting intellectual property.

THE WORLD THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

"Whenever I go there, I come out completely changed," said one Norwegian recently of Oslo's International Museum of Children's Art. The Museum was founded in 1986 by Rafael and Alla Goldin, who still run it today. It contains some 100,000 works of art—paintings, drawings, ceramics, collages, tapestries, sculptures, books and other articles, all created by children from more than 130 countries.

The Goldins and their colleagues consider children's art to be one of the liveliest and most original aspects of popular culture, as well as an important part of the world's cultural heritage.

The museum has a threefold purpose. Firstly, it collects, classifies and preserves graphic art, literature and films from all over the world, and also houses a vast library of books about children's art. Secondly, it organizes classes in drawing, painting, dance, music, theatre, cinema and other subjects, open to both children and adults. Thirdly, it organizes competitions and travelling exhibitions, one of which, on the theme of natural catastrophes, will visit Athens in December 1991. The Museum also publishes reproductions, catalogues and books, and furthers the understanding of children's art by holding conferences and seminars.

Above, Rafael Goldin and a group of children at the Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We should like to thank the International Museum of Children's Art (Oslo) for allowing us to reproduce the works from its collection shown on the following pages: **Cover, Back cover, Pages 7 (right), 14, 15, 16 (left), 16-17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26-27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 50:** © The International Museum of Children's Art, Oslo. **Page 3:** UNESCO/Eclair Mondial. **Page 4 (3):** UNESCO/Dominique Roger. **Page 4 (4):** AGIP/Robert Cohen, Paris. **Page 4 (1), (2), (5), (6):** UNESCO. **Page 5:** UNESCO/Archives. **Page 6 (1):** Harumi Imaizumi, Bangladesh. **Page 6 (left):** © UNESCO Clubs. **Page 6 (right):** ITI/ITU/UNESCO. **Pages 7 (left), 8:** Merillon © Gamma, Paris. **Page 10:** Ulf Andersen © Gamma, Paris. **Page 11:** Mireille Vautier © ANA, Paris. **Page 12:** © Claude Sauvageot, Paris. **Page 20:** Ernst Haas © Magnum, Paris. **Page 21:** © Eric Larrayadieu/Editing, Paris. **Pages 27 (below), 28:** © Ana Vasquez, Paris. **Pages 43, 44, 45:** © Les Cahiers du Cinéma, Paris. **Page 46:** UNESCO/Gérard Bolla. **Pages 47, 48 (above):** UNESCO/Pascal Maréchaux. **Page 48 (below):** UNESCO/J.P. Heim.

The credit line for the front cover photo of our August-September issue was inadvertently omitted. It should have read: Photo © Stock/Vloo, Paris.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ A timely clarification

You commissioned an article from me on the concept of time in the Islamic world. It appeared in the April 1991 issue of your magazine under the title—chosen by your editors—"A Many-sided Concept". The article underwent too many changes, made without my knowledge, for me to ratify them by my silence. Entire passages were cut, sometimes distorting my argument; the order of the paragraphs was changed, muddying the exposition, and much of the savour of the piece was lost.

To make things worse, it was accompanied by a box containing a letter from Gouverneur Morris (the U.S. Minister to France during the French Revolution) to General Washington. I should be glad to learn what possible relevance this might have had to the contents of the article. If there was none, as seems to have been the case, then you might at least admit that this ill-chosen box should not have been there in the first place.

Ahmad Hasnawi
Paris
(France)

As we inform each of our authors, we reserve the right to edit their articles, if necessary, so as to make them suitable for an international cultural magazine like the UNESCO Courier *which is produced for a wide audience. Naturally, in so doing we aim to maintain absolute fidelity to the meaning and spirit of the piece, seeking only to make it fully intelligible to our readers.*

As for quotations from other authors, these are interpolated in the text not only to provide information about the theme of each issue but also to add variety to the contents and appearance of the magazine. Sometimes the links with individual articles are direct; at other times they are not.

■ Multiple encounters

With reference to your "In Brief" column of March 1991, you should really have specified in your note on Spanish emigration to the Americas that 1992 is the 500th anniversary of the *third* (or possibly three hundred and third) "encounter between the Old and New Worlds".

Aside from the "discovery" of America by Norsemen (no longer deemed a mere possibility), the Old World met the New in who knows how many fresh transmigrations via the Bering Strait over tens of thousands of years. However galling it may be to the monumental egos of Europeans, their ancestors had nothing to do with the original settlement of the Americas.

Robert MacLeod
Sirdar
(Canada)

■ West Indian rhythms

As a West Indian, I very much enjoyed the March 1991 issue, entitled "A World of Music". Here in Trinidad and Tobago we have music from all corners of the globe, and from it we have produced our own blends, namely calypso, which originated here in the days of slavery, and the pans, the instrument of the steel bands, which has been the musical invention of the 20th century. Steel bands have travelled to all corners of the earth, a move pioneered by the early, still-strong bands like the All-stars and the Samaroo Jets. The pans play everything from classical to calypso music and jazz. It was a pity they were not mentioned in any of the articles.

In the world today, the need to interact is greater than ever. The concept of World Music is a manifestation of this.

R.P.I.Gajar
Sacarigua
(Trinidad and Tobago)

■ Learning to appreciate art

Thank you for reproducing "Woman in an Interior" by the Georgian artist Irakli Parjiani in your February issue. Despite the importance of art for humankind, the ability to appreciate it is not within everyone's reach, and I feel that more should be done to educate public opinion in this respect. Why not get together a group of art critics, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, artists and possibly a number of readers of the *Courier* to discuss the problem? It would also be interesting to hear what the specialists have to say about art education for the young.

Ketevan Kintsurashvili
Tbilisi
(USSR)

■ An open letter to Professor Schwartzenberg

The interview with you published in the July issue of the *Courier* came as a ray of hope, providing a better understanding of the terrible disease of cancer. It was impossible not to be moved by the interest you take in each of your patients, or by your brave message of life in the face of death. Above all, you helped dispel some misapprehensions about euthanasia—a terrible choice that demands great courage of both patient and doctor.

Laurence Tissier
Charbonnières-les-Bains
(France)

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